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ABSTRACT

Noting that most junior high level curricula do not take into account students' rapid mental and physical changes, the articles in this focused journal issue recommend works and teaching strategies that harmonize with these student needs. The titles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Adolescent Development and the Growth of Writing Abilities" (Barry M. Kroll); (2) "'Decentering': Growth in Writing Maturity through the Discovery of Real Communication" (Frank C. Cronin); (3) "Objectivity: A Criterion of Excellence in Personal Writing by Adolescents" (Elwyn R. Jenkins); (4) "The 'Middletown Spirit'--Catalyst toward Cosmopolitanism" (James P. Beck); (5) "Adolescent Students: Allowing for Student Characteristics in the Classroom" (Suzanne Padgett); (6) "The Uses of Student Journals" (Ken Autrey); (7) "Writing through Trust" (Marty Brewster); (8) "Focusing and Detailing: A Descriptive Solution" (Robert L. Wilson); (9) "The Cinquain: A Pathway to Improved Paragraphs of Character Analysis" (Jo Anne R. Bryant); (10) "Anton Chekov on Writing" (Ross Beatty); (11) "Using Essay Contests in the Classroom: for Fun, for Profit, for Practical Writing Experiences" (Suzanna G. Colby); (12) "Reading and Writing; Is There a Connection?" (Bonnie L. Miller); (13) "Mythology and Maturation" (Wilma Bell); (14) "The Responses of Adolescent Boys to Three Short Stories: Implications for Curriculum Selection" (Susan G. Bennett); (15) "'The Catherine Wheel': Bridging Adolescence and Adulthood" (Lynn A. Crandall); (16) "Classic Salability" (John C. Holcomb); (17) "Using Group Dynamics in the Classroom" (Pam Miller); (18) "Shakespeare in the 7th Grade? It Works" (Marilyn J. School); (19) "'The Scarlet Letter': A New Look at a Classic" (Virginia McCormick); (20) "Involving Students with the Short Story" (Charles R. Duke); (21) "'Doing' a Poem: 'The Lurpps Are on the Loose' or How to Start Losing Your Fear of Classroom Drama" (James Charnock); (22) "'Younits': Guided Independent Study" (Linda Shadiow); (23) "Developing Ethnic Literacy in the Elementary School through Reading and Literature" (Elizabeth E. Seittelman); (24) "International Growth of the Junior Novel" (Osayimwense Osa); (25) "Spycraft: A Study of Spies and Counter-Spies in the English Classroom" (Marie J. Wittek); (26) "A Rationale for Teaching Regional Literature in the Public School" (Christopher Gould); (27) "Yet Another Version of Pastoral: Hal Borland's 'When Legends Die'" (Dennis Walsh); (28) "Nonfiction: The Orphan of the Literature Class" (Margaret Grove Ferry); and (29) "A Teacher's Annotated Subject Bibliography of Resources for and about Lesbian and Gay Male Youth" (Edward C. Paolella). A section of Monday morning teaching techniques--"A Sweet Composition" (Connie Pilkington) and "Some Writing Every Day" (Carl L. Anderson)--concludes the journal. (HTH)

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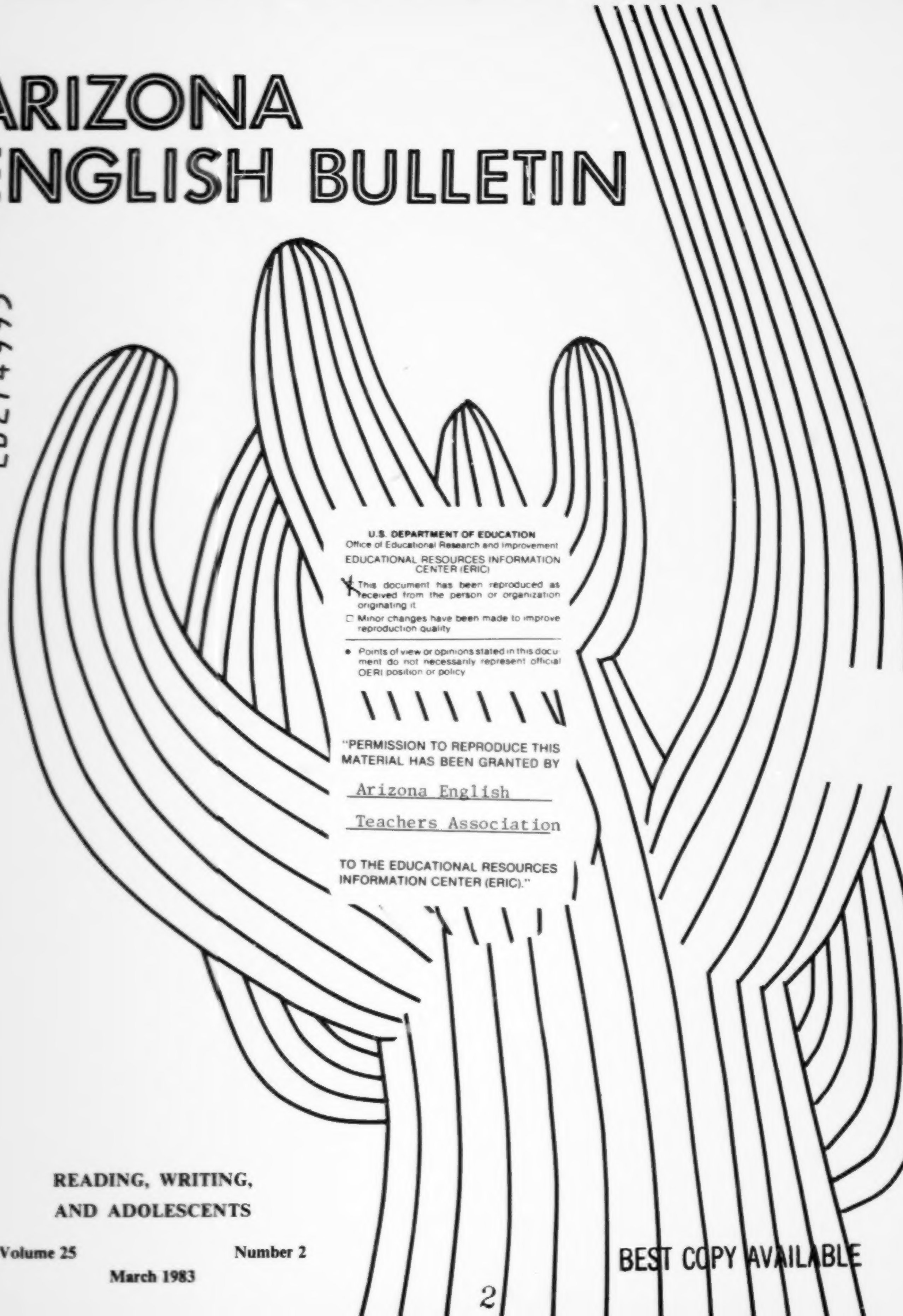

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READING, WRITING, AND ADOLESCENTS

Volume 25 Number 2
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The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The BULLETIN exists to create effective statewide articulation of English and Language Arts teachers at all levels, to increase awareness of new ideas, programs, and movements in English, and to improve instruction at every level.

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Winter 1984:	Teaching Non-fiction	(Nov. 1, 1983)
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Fall 1984:	Writing Across the Curriculum	(Aug. 1, 1984)
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FROM THE EDITOR

Although the characteristics of adolescents are well-known and well-documented, school curricula too often appear to have been designed without taking them into account. At one extreme the English/Language Arts curriculum seems (almost perversely) to work counter to adolescent needs. Junior high students, for example, are undergoing dramatic physical changes. They are restless, full of energy, and preoccupied with their bodies. One has only to visit any junior high school classroom to observe this phenomenon. And yet we give these students exercises to do that keep them in their seats 50 minutes out of 50. They are interested, psychologists tell us, in novelty and variety; we give them repetitive grammar drills. They are beginning to develop their own value systems; we assign them trivial stories to read, written to a precise readability level and impose similar rigid formulas on their own writing. None of this seems likely to foster either mature thinking or a love for language.

The other extreme is represented--I'm happy to say--by articles in this issue of the BULLETIN. These authors obviously know adolescence and adolescents. They recommend works and teaching strategies that harmonize with that knowledge. They neither condescend to students by expecting too little nor frustrate them by expecting too much (How much is too much?).

A wide range of subject matter, philosophy, and methodology is included here; it applies to adolescence all the way from upper elementary level through college freshmen, an elastic continuum, indeed. Every teacher will find ideas here to help meet the many challenges of teaching reading and writing to adolescents.

Margaret Fleming

The BULLETIN has encountered several logistical difficulties lately, which have impeded our service. Let me apologize if any of the following have happened to you:

Delay. The text of the BULLETIN is typed on the English Department's word processor, which produces professional copy, but which also has many demands on it from everyone in the department. Since it is still the best alternative we have, please bear with us. We're trying harder.

Damage. A number of copies of the November issue (Vol. 25, #1) were delivered with covers and/or pages missing, probably because the issue was so much larger and heavier than usual. This should not happen in the future.

Non-delivery. Several copies were returned to me because the address labels had come off. We are using a different brand this time, hoping to avoid the problem.

If you did not receive Vol 25, #1, "Writing Projects," please let me know and I'll send you another copy. Or let me know if yours was damaged so badly it needs to be replaced.

Margaret Fleming

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ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH OF WRITING ABILITIES

Barry M. Kroll

It is something of a cliche to describe adolescence as a time of transition, a period of "storm and stress." The most familiar aspects of adolescent development are physical (the consequences of puberty) and psychological (the result of a search for personal identity). Somewhat less familiar, perhaps, is the idea that adolescence is a time of important changes in conceptual skills. Most secondary teachers will, of course, have heard about the work of Piaget and will recognize the phrase "formal operational thinking" as his designation for the final stage of cognitive development, a stage which usually coincides with adolescence.[1] But the relevance of formal operations for the teaching of English is a topic rarely mentioned in books or articles on Piaget's theory and seldom discussed in courses on educational psychology. My goal, then, is to examine a few aspects of formal operations, both cognitive and affective, exploring some ways in which an understanding of formal thought might be useful to English teachers. Most of my discussion will center on the relevance of cognitive development for understanding the growth of adolescents' writing abilities.

It is not surprising that Piaget's theory of formal operations has seldom been applied to the teaching of English. To begin with, Piaget's work on adolescent thinking drew quite heavily on investigations of problem solving, investigations in which the problems resemble experiments in physics or chemistry.[2] For example, in one study involving a "chemical's task," subjects were shown four identical flasks filled with fluids without any coloration—they all looked like water—and a smaller flask with a dropper. While the subjects watched, an experimenter added drops from the small flask to some liquid in two glasses, liquid which came from one or several of the larger flasks. The liquid in one glass turned yellow, while the liquid in the other remained clear. The subjects were then asked to try to figure out how to produce the yellow fluid. They could experiment by mixing fluids together. The researchers examined the ways that children and adolescents went about trying to solve this problem. Pre-adolescents tried out various mixtures, but their method was unsystematic and they failed to test all possible combinations. Adolescents, on the other hand, tended to approach the problem as a scientist would, devising a hypothesis and organizing an experiment to test it. While such intellectual skills may be very relevant to teachers of the physical sciences, it is easy to see how they might appear inapplicable to the teaching of English.

In addition to the focus on scientific problem solving, Piaget's account of formal operational thought is itself highly formal and abstract, couched in the language of propositional logic. For many of us trained principally in the humanities, such concepts as the 16 binary operations of combinatorial logic and the four-group transformations are not easily accessible. The result is a tendency for English teachers to ignore Piaget's theory, unaware of its relevance for understanding many social, affective, and cognitive aspects of adolescence.

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Fortunately, one can understand some basic features of formal operational thinking without recourse to the abstractions of formal logic and in a way that is relevant to subject areas other than the physical sciences. In brief, it is legitimate to view the transition to formal operations as entailing two parallel movements: from thinking about the concrete to thinking about the abstract, and from thinking about the actual to thinking about the possible.[3] That is, the pre-adolescent tends to be centered, conceptually, on experiences with concrete objects and actual occurrences. Thinking remains tied to perceptual realities, to the "thing itself." Such thinking is the basis for the "trial and error" kind of problem solving that many children use on the chemicals task. With the onset of formal operations, the adolescent can begin to go beyond the concrete and the actual, viewing experience as just one of many possibilities, and speculating and hypothesizing about what might be in addition to considering what is. Such thinking is at the root of the hypothesis-testing kind of problem solving that many adolescents use on the chemicals task.

What I want to consider is whether these two developmental movements—from concrete to abstract and from actual to possible—might help us understand some aspects of the growth of writing abilities in the secondary school years. I'm going to focus my discussion on writing which has an explanatory or expository aim, because in such discourse writers bring their conceptual abilities to bear in two realms of knowing: the subject matter or topic for the paper (knowing in the realm of objects or ideas) and the audience for the paper (knowing in the realm of other people).[4]

In most exposition, a writer's purposes lead him or her to deal with a world of objects or ideas—not simply with the particulars of isolated phenomena, but with classes, causes, connections, or contrasts. Thus most expository tasks entail a shift away from concrete phenomena and toward more abstract attributes and relationships. This shift from concrete to more abstract knowing has been neatly labeled as a transition from "describer thinking" to "explainer thinking," terms devised by the British psychologist E. A. Peel.[5] These labels are useful because they capture a feature of immature exposition—that it is often thinly disguised description. While description has a legitimate function, my experience suggests that less mature writers tend to rely on describer thinking even when more advanced kinds of explanation are called for. Thus younger writers tend to focus on the concrete, circumstantial aspects of a topic, naming its elements rather than relating those elements or organizing them into a system of relations.

In addition to dealing with the world of objects and ideas, writers also need to conceptualize the world of other people who will serve as an audience for their writing. A pre-adolescent can cope with an actual audience, as long as it is not too diverse or foreign, but the adolescent who has achieved formal operations can also begin to deal with possible audiences, projecting an image of his or her readers and coordinating their perspectives. Thus knowing in the realm of other people—social knowing—evolves from the actual to the possible, along a path leading from the immediate world of people whom one knows through everyday interactions to an abstract world of people whom one has never met.

To this point I've dealt in quite general terms with the adolescent's intellectual skills and their relevance for writing. To illustrate my point more specifically, however, I want to present two examples of explanatory writing. These texts are responses to a special assignment in which I showed students how to play a new board game (something like Parcheesi) and then asked them to write an explanation of it—a set of directions aimed at teaching someone else how to play the game.[6] In solving this writing problem, the writers had to apply their thinking skills both to the realm of objects (knowing how to play the game and how to represent it in writing) and to the realm of others (knowing what a reader would need to know).

The first writer—a seventh-grader who is one of the weaker students in his group—produced a text which is largely a description of the sequence of setting up the board and playing through the game.

> The first thing you do is put the birds into each of your hands and the other player picks which hand she wants and then they take the birds and put them at the beginning and the one who chose from the birds she flips the chip and whatever color it ends up to be like blue then the lady with the blue bird rolls the die in the cup then she moves her bird and then the other player moves her bird and when they get at the end that is the end of the game after someone finishes the game.

This text is characterized by chains of "and . . . then" statements, in a single sentence, contributing to my sense that the writer is describing a series of actions rather than explaining a process. Various aspects of the game are strung together in sequence, making it difficult for a reader either to comprehend the different elements (e.g., setting up, rules) or to envision the game as a larger system with an objective and strategies of play. Moreover, several important rules are omitted, perhaps because the writer did not anticipate what information his audience needs to have. This explanation is certainly not all bad. Some of the concrete elements and actions of the game are accurately described. But the apparent reliance on describer thinking renders the explanation less than fully effective.

The second writer—a ninth grader—uses quite a different strategy, one that is prevalent among his peers. Rather than stringing together statements about the game, this writer groups and classifies various elements, using the more abstract categories of "Pieces," "To set up the game," and "To play." The writer's use of these categories probably evinces some explainer thinking as well as an appreciation of the way such labels facilitate the reader's understanding of the game.

> Pieces
>
> board, chip, dice, cup, 2 birds
>
> To set up the game:
>
> Take both birds in your hands and mix them up behind your back. Have your opponent pick one hand with a bird in it.
>
> On the board there are 2 dots, yellow and blue. At the opposite end from the dots are 2 black squares, put the bird you picked on the black square on the same side as the dot with the color of your bird.
>
> Flip the chip. Whichever color is up that person goes first.
>
> To play:
>
> Put the dice in the cup and roll it. Whichever color turns up move your bird to that stripe. If a bird is on the same stripe as the one you rolled you may stay in the same spot; you lose your turn.
>
> If you roll a white on the dice you lose your turn. After you get towards the end with the dots you may move only if the color stripe is open ahead of you. You roll until you roll the color of your dot and you win unless that color stripe is ahead of you and open.

Older writers, especially high-school juniors and seniors, go even further with their abstract thinking, often explaining the game in great detail as a complete system consisting of an objective, a collection of materials, and an organized set of rules of play. The older adolescent's concern for the game as a system contrasts with the seventh-grader's focus on the game as a series of concrete moves or the ninth-grader's focus on the game as a set of rules.

Thus formal operational thought can show up in adolescents' expository writing as a transition from conrete, describer thinking to more abstract, explainer thinking. We might also see the effects of formal operational thinking in writing which has a persuasive or argumentative aim, manifested as the transition from dualistic thinking (the tendency to see controversies in terms of concrete, polarized camps--good or bad, right or wrong, friend or foe) to more abstract, relativistic thinking (the tendency to see controversies in terms of a number of possible perspectives, so that both sides in an argument can be "right" from a certain point of view or in a particular context). The central problem for teachers, of course, is determining how to facilitate these transitions. I would suggest that two complementary kinds of experiences are useful: opportunities to discover that old ways of concrete thinking don't work very well, and opportunities to make use of one's emerging powers for reflective abstraction. An important way to provide these sorts of opportunities is to engage students in work on writing "problems."

The kind of writing problem that I have in mind is illustrated by the task of explaining a new game to someone who doesn't know anything about it.[7] For some students, the very process of trying to explain the game will point up the limitations of a describer approach to the problem. Old patterns of thought will seem inadequate for meeting the demands inherent in the task. Other students may simply describe the game and see little wrong with such an approach. While there is nothing inherently wrong with such a strategy, these students need to discover the limitations of describer thinking. This might be accomplished by comparing descriptive papers with papers which take an explanatory approach, demonstrating that concrete descriptions of a game components and rules of play. Perhaps a more effective demonstration, though a more complicated one, would involve having some students who don't know the game read the descriptions, talk about their understanding of the game, and then attempt to play it. Finally, for those adolescents who are already able to engage in abstract thinking, the game problem is useful in that it provides an opportunity for them to apply their powers of thought to explaining the rules of a game for an audience of all possible players—a problem which even college students can find challenging.

By providing interesting and challenging writing problems, the English teacher creates a context in which students' higher-level conceptual skills can be consolidated and extended. But in this process, the adolescent faces more than simply a cognitive transition from abstract to concrete thinking. What may be overlooked or obscurerd in a cognitive view of development is the extent to which feelings of frustration and apprehension can accompany the transition to formal operations. Frustration can come from sensing the inadequacy of concrete thinking while still lacking the structures and habits of mind to move very far beyond that mode of thought. Apprehension can arise when formal operational thinking reveals a world in which knowledge seems subjective and relative, a world in which each individual appears to be ultimately alone.[8] On the one hand, some adolescents attempt to deny the disquieting implications of their newly discovered sense of subjectivity and relativity. Some seek conformity through strict allegiances to fashions, groups, or special persons, while others seek certainty through an exaggerated and often unexamined commitment to religious or secular ideologies. On the other hand, some adolescents try to over-extend their new powers of thought. LSome accept so completely their perceptions of subjectivity that they abandon all standards of judgment, becoming convinced that truth and goodness are simply whatever an individual believes them to be. Others exult in an exaggerated sense of personal uniqueness, to the extent that they may feel a special sense of destiny, or believe that life's tragedies will happen to others but not to them. Yet others get caught up in untempered idealism and become impatient with the discrepancies they perceive between the actual and the possible.

In acquiring formal operational thinking, the adolescent gives up the child's comfortably concrete world of actuality for the adult's more abstract and problematic world of possibility. A way of knowing reality is lost, while another is gained—a more adequate way, because the new powers of formal thought enable adolescents to weigh alternatives, consider a number of solutions to problems, coordinate multiple points of view, and speculate about the possible consequences of actions or events. I've suggested that this kind of hypothetical thinking can be fostered in the English classroom as well as it can in the science laboratory, especially when students are encouraged to work on writing problems which challenge them to use their abilities to think about the abstract and the possible. This means that teachers will need to motivate some of their students to try explainer thinking when describer thinking might be more familiar and comfortable. It means creating a classroom atmosphere in which new ways of thinking and writing can be explored without fear of penalties for only partial success. And it means being sympathetic to the emotional difficulties which accompany the adolescent's transition to a new world of knowing and being.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Piaget's theory of formal operations is explained in a number of introductory books. Some of the clearest and most helpful include Philip A. Cowan, Piaget with Feeling (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), pp. 248-298; John H. Flavell, Cognitive Development (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 101-118; Jeanette McCarthy Gallagher and Illene Cupit Noppe, "Cognitive Development and Learning," in Understanding Adolescence, ed. James F. Adams, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1976), pp. 199-232; and Herbert Ginsberg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979), pp. 178-205.

[2] Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget, The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence (New York: Basic Books, 1958). The chemicals task is also presented in an excellent article: Everett Dulit, "Adolescent Thinking a la Piaget: The Formal Stage," Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 1 (1972), 281-301.

[3] As Inhelder and Piaget put it, the adolescent's intellectual development "makes it possible for him to escape the concrete present toward the realm of the abstract and the possible" (p. 342).

[4] James Moffett has discussed in some detail the development of writer-subject (I-it) and writer-audience (I-you) relations, a developmental scheme in which the process of abstraction plays a major role. See Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), especially chapter two.

[5] E. A. Peel, *The Nature of Adolescent Judgment* (London: Staples, Press, 1971).

[6] I've used this game in some previous work, and it is explained more completely in my article "Cognitive Egocentrism and the Problem of Audience Awareness in Written Discourse," *Research in the Teaching of English*, 12 (1978), 269-281.

[7] James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner also recommend having students write directions for games. See *Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp. 358-359.

[8] Some of the affective consequences of formal operations are discussed by Michael J. Chandler, "Adolescence, Egocentrism, and Epistemological Loneliness," in *Topics in Cognitive Development*, ed. Barbara Z. Presseisen, David Goldstein, and Marilyn H. Appel (New York: Plenum Press, 1978), pp. 137-145; and by David Elkind, "Egocentrism in Adolescence," *Child Development*, 38 (1967), 1025-1034.

1982 NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING: ARIZONA WINNERS

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Paul Anthony Felix, Nogales H.S., Nogales.
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Gaelle Helene Gralnek, Central H.S., Phoenix.
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Jani Timothy, Cactus H.S., Glendale.
Caryn Zent, Lake Havasu H.S., Lake Havasu.

Congratulations to all these students and to their teachers!

DECENTERING: GROWTH IN WRITING MATURITY THROUGH THE DISCOVERY OF REAL COMMUNICATION

Frank C. Cronin

One key to many of our students' writing problems is their difficulty in comprehending that real audiences do not see on their papers what they themselves "see". As we know from psycholinguistics, what they "see" in their heads is only remotely related to the electromagnetic radiation, the minute waves of light energy that strike their eyes, and is lost in an instant. Even many experienced and skilled teachers do not comprehend the facts that the eye is not the window of the soul and that the reader does not put words and sentences together to comprehend sentences, even though these are well established facts of psycholinguistic research. It has long been evident to researchers in psycholinguistics that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game in which most of the input comes from what the readers already know, as they unconsciously match up schemata or patterns of their own prior knowledge with the limited sampling of the printed page that the eye provides. Even between the eye and the brain, messages undergo a series of analyses and transformations.[1]

Once students grasp these basic physical-psychological facts, they will realize that most of the input in reading comes from what the reader already knows—from his or her long-term memory. Only then can they begin to understand the enormous importance of such writing principles as starting their explanations with what their readers know and keeping their overall organization crystal-clear by building up explanations from what their target audiences know.

Misunderstandings of these basic biological facts of the reading process are only the beginning of student writers' difficulties. The real key to so many of our student writers' problems is the distinct, but closely related, problem of their failure to comprehend the fact that reading audiences do not see what the writer sees, precisely because the specific experiences and facts that make generalizations meaningful to authors in such unique and special ways are never fully shared by any reading audience, however close. Nor do their reading audiences feel the special aura of connotations that surround their experience of their own words. Consequently they write in vague, fuzzy generalizations and incomplete thoughts because they cannot distinguish between what is in their heads (the validating specifics, the facts, the qualifications, etc.) and what is on paper. They look puzzled when we tell them that only a Mr. Spock (of "Star Trek") or another mind-reading audience could understand what they really mean from what they have written on paper, especially as their writing assignments qpproach the maturity and complexity of real-world writing.

Therefore, they must learn to understand that their own experience and insight are only partially shared by even the most familiar audiences. Consequently, they must learn to give the specifics that validate—or at least illustrate—their generalizations from their own experience.[2]

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The first and most effective strategy for dealing with these writing problems is some form of talk-write pedagogy, for example, simply asking the student questions until we draw out the specifics in the more relaxed setting of conversation. This strategy works beautifully because the self-conscious anxieties of writing are temporarily set aside, but this effective therapy is time-consuming. A supplementary and more time-efficient remedy is the live audience of fellow students in small groups reading each other's papers, or the whole class examining thermofaxed essays by classmates. Students tend to develop X-ray eyes when it comes to seeing the written communication problems of others, thereby learning to correct their own.

The application of talk-write pedagogy and publication of student writing for audiences of fellow students works very effectively—and has been written about extensively. But these teaching strategies alone are not enough. If they are to work in any permanent way, they must be supplemented by our students' clear understanding not only of the biology or psychology of reading—as we have seen, but also of the maturing process of decentering that has been going on within themselves since early childhood, and which must continue if they are to mature as writers.[4] Jean Piaget first used the phrase "egocentricity" to mean, not selfishness, but the young child's utter inability to understand that other people do not think and feel precisely as he or she does, or to put it another way, the innocent assumption that the universe revolves around himself or herself. As Mina Shaughnessey observes, the inexperienced writer assumes "that the reader understands what is going on in the writer's mind and therefore needs no introductions, transitions or explanations."[5]

Ironically, the teacher-audience tends to perpetuate students' inability to decenter, to focus on real-life audiences, because of teachers' unique ability to guess what the student is going to say almost before he or she attempts to say it—especially after years and years of teaching the same subject. Such teachers are habitually ready to complete a student's writing process in their own heads. Experienced subject teachers don't need organization, logic, transitions, clarifying specifics or any of the many other things a real world audience needs, especially when the subject is serious and somewhat complex, as it often is in real world written communication. In fact, teachers of subjects other than English tend to grade higher for the greater depth of insight that they can perceive in the poorly written, disorganized, or even garbled essay. Furthermore, in grading they often ignore the surface mistakes, while complaining to the English department about the quality of student writing.

After years of conditioning through school, student writers are so thoroughly fixated on this mind-reading audience of one, the "omniscient" teacher, that they are crippled as real-world writers. The word "crippled" is no exaggeration, since such students have developed deeply-ingrained, unconscious writing mechanisms and strategies for "psyching-out" subject teachers and take it for granted that those teachers will read between the lines in their habitual mind-reading fashion, organize and clarify things in their own heads, and deduct very little for mechanical errors—if the paper reveals intelligent insight into the subject. Thus able students in areas other than English imagine that they are good writers and that mechanical errors are petty matters that are fussed about only in the hothouse world of the English classroom, while the rest of the world is rightly unconcerned. Or they reach the slightly less absurd conclusion that good writing is merely a matter of "cleaning up" spelling and punctuation, while they remain utterly innocent of the deeper problems of written communication such as the achievement of organization, coherence, logic, clarity, and all the strategies necessary to achieve such essentials of successful communication.

The inevitable and painful awakening comes in college, technical school, and worst of all, in the real world, if it has not come in a high-powered composition course in high school. When young people are told by a college professor or a manager that their writing is incoherent—especially when they are trying to communicate some complex subject to a manager who really needs the information—they are at first too stunned to believe it. Only with difficulty do young high school graduates grasp the fact that the mind-reading teacher was a most unnatural audience, who disappeared forever with graduation from school. In a business or industrial organization, managers, unlike teachers, are not familiar with what the writer is working on from day to day. Consequently, the rhetorical circumstances of most real-world written communications are virtually the opposite of those in which school teachers were addressed. Furthermore, in our technological culture of ever-increasing complexity, nothing is official until it is put in writing. Consequently the person who "writes up" the idea gets the credit, and young employees are known to decision-makers, that is, to those who can promote them, primarily through their written reports—which enter suites that are closed to them. Thus, after years of grade and high school education, high school graduates often find themselves locked into the cognitive egocentrism of childhood in their writing. They are educational end-products that do not endear the English profession to leaders of business and industry.

Furthermore, the literary critical and impressionistic writing that consumes so much English class writing time is quite remote from the kinds of writing that our students will be doing for the rest of their lives, whatever the level of education they achieve. The vague, impressionistic and often "off the top of the head" emotive effusions so often written for English class—and so useful in helping blocked young writers—are quite the polar opposite from a precise report on how to run a restaurant more efficiently, fix a specific problem on a production line, or streamline a medical care delivery system.

Furthermore, such problem-solving, practical problems are far more likely to interest our students than the high art that they are too immature to appreciate or that is light years away from their actual sensibilities.

First-rate English teachers are wise enough to assign adolescent literature that is suitable for the sensibility and maturity of each age group. Why then not allow those students to use something in the novel, short story, or related classroom discussion as a springboard to subjects that really interest them? Then they are far more likely to research and write precisely and factually because they will be immersing themselves in subjects about which they care deeply—possibly for a series of papers. By contrast, forcing a subject on students in which they have no real interest, and therefore nothing to say, compels them into artificial and therefore unpleasant kinds of writing, from padding out the requisite number of pages with cliches and other obvious generalizations to psyching out their teachers and proceeding to paraphrase library books chosen to please them.

Such artificial, paingul, and futile writing further ingrains bad writing habits that have to be thoroughly and more painfully rooted out later on—if the students are to succeed in the precise, logical, highly organized, accurate, factual, problem-solving writing that they must produce for success in the real world.

Ironically, English teachers could easily have begun dealing with this problem years before in high school or middle school. The first step in this productive direction is to allow students to write about subjects that really interest them and about which they have something to say to their peers. And it is only when they struggle to communicate information and insights of their own to a live audience of those peers—whether on how to fix some part of a car, what specific strategies for survival succeed in the inner city, or how to raise a prize animal on the farm—only then do they begin to learn about precise, accurate written communication.

Allowing students to write about scientific, mechanical, or other real-world subjects requires a little courage on the part of English teachers. Many are simply afraid to let go of the power of the familiar topic because they are insecure and afraid about their qualifications. Such teachers should be reminded that most real-world writing is ordinarily done for lay audiences (since everyone is a layman outside his or her own specialty), and this is precisely the situation in almost every business organization. As composition teachers, our specialty is rhetoric (and that is just what the bright budding scientists and technicians need). **By letting go of the security of the familiar topic, teachers become real audiences for their students' writing. And in the same process they may learn a great deal.** At the same time, when students find teachers to be interested readers (and learners), they experience the true joys of authorship, perhaps for the first time in their lives. How ironic it is that so many of our brightest studetns enthusiastically produce highly intelligent science fair projects, while often being forced in English class to write on artifically imposed topics. Often these deal with high art which they are psychologically incapable of really understanding because of their youth and inexperience—as many of us were at their age. And even if they understand literature that is appropriate to their level of psychological development and sensibility—they may still have only a limited number of meaningful things to say about it. After all, almost none of them are destined to become literary critics like ourselves. And when we teach composition, we are not supposed to be trying to clone ourselves.

In teaching composition, we are teaching a skills course; we are not merely subject teachers who have no real interest in what our students have to say—having heard it so often and knowing it far better than student writers. Rather, we are a real audience for our students, interested in reading and learning as we teach the skills and strategies of rhetoric. To do this some of us may have to overcome prejudices concerning science and technology picked up in graduate school or in the course of studying our college major.[7] We live in the midst of the Elizabethan Age of Science and technology, and our students can tell us a great deal about it—even if their own research is limited only to the popular journals listed in the Reader's Guide or just talking with experts they know—in preparation for a single paper, or a series, for an interested, sympathetic, and helping adult—ourselves.

Discovering an interested teacher-audience is only part of the solution for our student writers; trying to write effectively for a live audience of peers with diverse interests and backgrounds is an invaluable writing experience, especially if there is constant feedback from that live audience. For example, when peers—individually, in small groups, or in a class reading a thermofaxed essay—tell a student that he or she is not coming across clearly or is leaving too many questions unanswered—student writers really believe it. With out experienced guidance, a peer audience can provide both the emotional support and corrective feedback necessary for writer enthusiasm and the progress that it triggers. Even better, when a student's presentation to a peer audience becomes the "big event," then the teacher can fit more naturally into the productive role of coach, rather than being primarily a judge.

At best, we are teacher-coaches for our students when we teach composition. Football players develop their skills through lots of practice, year after year, and not through hearing years of long lectures. The sports coaches' lectures are short pep talks before and after the main activity: practice and guidance under their skilled eyes at every stage of the process of the game. It is only by taking students through the whole process of writing, showing them the special skills and strategies of each stage and cycle, and by diagnosing their specific problems as we observe them practicing at the various stages of the process, that we succeed as writing teacher-coaches.

Ironically, our education in literary criticism taught us to be judges of the finished product; that orientation alone tends to make us ineffective composition teachers. The good golf pro does not simply grade the score card after the round of golf is finished. Rather, he or she leads the novice through the entire game, providing practical, corrective tips. Similarly, our students' trial and error writing for real, interested audiences—with us near at hand at every step of the writing process, diagnosing and prescribing remedies for specific difficulties and, all the while, providing large doses of emotional support throughout the stages and cycles of the writing process—is the kind of real, effective coaching that makes English exciting, a real preparation for the big game: publication—for peers, employers, college "profs," and the world at large.

The means of publication for peer audiences are ready at hand: opaque projectors, discussion groups to go over other's drafts, public reading, thermofaxing, etc. In brief, substantial growth in writing maturity, the decentering process will occur only when students have found real audiences for subjects on which they really have something to say, subjects they really care about and can try out on a series of sympathetic, supportive audiences that gently offer suggestions for improvement. After all, this is how we all learned to speak.[8]

FOOTNOTES

[1] For a clear layman's explanation of these see Frank Smith, Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read, Second Edition. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

[2] See Francis Christenson and Bonnijean Christensen, A New Rhetoric (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), pp. 8-9, et passim.

[3] See Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 76-141.

[4] See Barry Kroll, "Cognitive Egocentrism and The Problem of Audience Awareness in Written Discourse," in Research in the Teaching of English, 12, (1978), pp. 269-281.

[5] Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 240.

[6] See J. C. Mathes and Dwight W. Stevenson, "Audience Analysis: The Problem and a Solution" in Strategies for Business and Technical Writing, ed. Kevin J. Harty (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jonvanovice, Inc., 1980), pp. 188-204.

[7] For an eloquent articulation of those prejudices see Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

[8] For a superb discussion of these similarities--and differences--as well as helpful teaching tips see Kenneth J. Kantor and Donald L. Rubin's "Between Speaking and Writing; Processes of Differentation" in Exploring Speaking-Writing Relationships: Connections and Contrasts, Ed. Barry M. Kroll and Roberta J. Vann. (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981), pp. 55-81.

HIGHER-LEVEL SKILLS DON'T JUST HAPPEN; THEY MUST BE TAUGHT, RESEARCHERS SAY

Students' failure to develop higher-level skills of critical reading and analytical writing in secondary school appears to be "a direct reflection of current practices in testing and instruction." This is the conclusion of nationally known reading specialists and researchers who contributed to a new book from NCTE. SECONDARY SCHOOL READING: WHAT RESEARCH REVEALS FOR THE CLASSROOM. The authors believe that if junior and senior high reading instruction were based on current knowledge from research—instead of on habit and on the notion that teaching reading is up to the elementary schools—most high school students today would read with greater understanding, enjoy reading, and learn more.

Recent National Assessment findings show that students are doing well in the language arts—up to a point. Students' loss of early momentum in reading can be traced to the prevalence of multiple-choice tests, superficial class discussion, and the near-absence of assignments integrating sustained reading with sustained writing. The authors call for:

(1) a realization that junior/senior high students, confronting complex texts, need systematic instruction in critical and analytical skills, not more elementary level "basics";

(2) a commitment to teach all students how to "read to learn" (to figure out their own purpose in reading, use appropriate strategies, and monitor their own reading behavior);

(3) rethinking of testing and teaching practices to make reading more than mere extraction of facts from print

SECONDARY SCHOOL READING: WHAT RESEARCH REVEALS FOR THE CLASSROOM. Alan Berger, ed. 206 pages, paper. Price $10.75; NCTE members $9.50. ISBN: 0-8141-4295-8. LC: 82-61719. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 42958.

OBJECTIVITY: A CRITERION OF EXCELLENCE IN PERSONAL WRITING BY ADOLESCENTS

Elwyn R. Jenkins

The place of individualism and self-expression in English teaching has been a controversial issue during the last twenty years. The "creative", "personal" or "free" writing movement received its main impetus from the writings of David Holbrook (1961, 1964a, 1964b), who showed how personal writing may have therapeutic value for the child writer, and, by freeing him from inhibitions imposed by an insistence on mechanical accuracy, may in fact increase his confidence in writing, thus facilitating an improvement in his writing skill. However, warnings against the extremities of this approach soon appeared. In his influential book on the teaching of English, The Disappearing Dais, Whitehead (1966) attacked the proponents of creative writing on two counts. He claimed that their lionising of immature writing by children was an abrogation of normal standards of criticism, and he questioned the validity of the exclusive claims being made for the value of personal writing. For one thing, he said, its therapeutic value is not normally apparent to the teacher, or at any rate not amenable to evaluation; and he stressed that writing of other kinds is equally valuable for the child's development: "To be satisfied with private and uncontrolled" free association is to exclude all too resolutely the depersonalising and socialising function which is inherent in the very nature of language itself" (p. 180). Another notable book on English teaching which was published in the same year, F. D. Flower's Language and Education (1966, pp. 138-139), expressly endorses "objectification" as an aim of English teaching:

> There is probably a regular succession of stages of gradual objectification of experience, a process which perhaps may be speeded up or slowed down for any individual but which cannot be by-passed. To help students make an orderly progress through personal experience to an impersonal standpoint is a major objective of the English lesson.

Writing eight years later, Witkin (1974, pp. 58-59) reported that little trace of the creative writing cult remained in English schools: "There appeared to be a manifest tendency . . . to suppress as much (if not more) as to facilitate the self-expression of the pupil." In fact, he says, English teachers actively encourage the depersonalising and socialising function of language:

> The teacher most strongly rewards the evidence of objectivity on the part of the pupils, their capacity to grasp other perspectives and to be realistic in their appraisal of human situations including their own. It is this burgeoning objectivity in the pupil that delights so many English teachers, and not without reason, for it is certainly one of the great achievements of adolescent development.

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Witkin himself calls for a balance in English teaching which will give due recognition to feeling as well, because "adolescence is a period of stirring emotionalism, of deep shifts of affect, the discovery of passion and the embrace of commitment, of undying love of absolutes and total involvement."

Balancing "objectivity" and "passion" is an obligation for the English teacher in the classroom, but it becomes problematical in establishing critical standards for juvenile writing, because one does not know whether to value clumsy writing that was obviously written with feeling above writing that is polished. This is not a problem in normal literary criticism, because a mature writer must be judged on how the quality of the finished product of his writing matches up to the norms established by every work of literature ever created, so that question of degree of initial feeling are subordinated to questions of the quality of portrayal and communication of that feeling. "To succeed in art is to convey an experience to others in such a form that the experience is actively re-created, . . . actually lived through by those to whom it is offered," says Raymond Williams (1961, p. 34). The teachers and writers whom Whitehead accused of abrogating standards placed a higher premium upon the quality of the adolescent's original experience; if they did remark upon the writing itself, it was to admire features that pointed to the authenticity of the experience, whether or not such features would be regarded as gaucheries if adult standards were applied.

In the course of a study that I made of writing by adolescents, I was able to identify objectification as one of the cognitive and linguistic strategies employed by the writers in committing their experience and feelings to writing. Another strategy affecting the personal/impersonal dimension of their writing is their use of cliche, which will not be discussed in this article. The scripts quoted here come from two sources: writing done by boys and girls in the eleventh year of schooling (i.e. 15 - 17 years old) which was addressed to an unknown peer-audience at another school; and the contents of "writers' journals" by another group of girls of the same age.

Analysis of the scripts indicates that the degree of objectivity depends upon the writers' use of two different techniques. One technique is the use of stylistic devices, known nowadays as "foregrounding"; the other technique is the conceptual device by which writers distance themselves from their subject matter. Both kinds of distancing may be found in the same piece of writing. Foregrounding, a concept formulated by the Czech school of structuralists, is defined by Lodge (1977, p. 2) as follows: "Any item in discourse that attracts attention to itself for what it is, rather than acting as a vehicle for information, is foregrounded." Distancing is achieved by the writer's taking a stance outside the circumstances about which he is writing, and consciously applying judgments which he has subsequently formulated. A scale for measuring distancing is that given by Wilkinson (1978, p. 31) for analysing children's writing on what he calls the "self-other" dimension:

1. emotion expressed: its uniqueness, how far these are the writer's own feelings;

2. emotion expressed and evaluated (e.g., "I felt as though I was going to burst");

3. self image: awareness of how one appears or might appear (e.g., "I looked very silly");

4. awareness of the springs and complexities of emotion (e.g., "I suppose I must have been jealous to behave like that").

Here is one passage from the "subjective" pole, which illustrates by its lack of foregrounding and distancing how some personal writing by school pupils is so strongly expressive that the public, or pragmatic, qualities of language become insignificant. I quote it verbatim:

> WHEN EVERYTHING GOES WRONG
>
> How many times have you had to think about yourself, perhaps not had to, but in a moment when everything goes wrong you go to somewhere quiet and contemplate the type of person you are.
>
> The whole world seems to be pointing out your mistakes. You have done something which is for the benefit of other people, not for yourself and it takes up valuable time. You thought that if you did it in this way instead of that it would be for the better. When the people know about it they really give you a lecture. You seem to know instinctively that all those hours of work was a waste of time. They then, demand more of your time, so often this also takes up somebody elses time, who is not involved in the whole situation at all.
>
> One of your friends whom you thought was a great friend, turns another colour towards you. You walk in your own thoughts with everybody pointing at you. No matter how hard you dig you won't find any smiles only cold shoulders.
>
> It's times like these that you have no confidence, and only see the bad side of yourself.
>
> When the world goes wrong, I never, no matter what my mother my friends or myself try to convince me, I feel like a black, ugly, blotchy freak. I feel that I can't face up to problems.
>
> But I don't consider myself a baby even though I might be quiet and bottle everything, I try my utmost to face up to my problems alone.

Far from consciously using language as an artifice, the writer has not even paid enough attention to the language medium to achieve normal linguistic patterns, with the result that solecisms occur such as the anacoluthon in the paragraph beginning "When the world goes wrong." The transparency of this writing contrasts with literary discourse, which, Lodge (1977, p. 2) points out, "is characterized by consistent and systematic foregrounding." Having a peer-audience has prompted the writer to tackle the topic vigorously, but the audience loses its importance and the purpose of the writing as communication takes second place to its function as a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." This progression is marked by the shift in the fifth paragraph from the impersonal pronoun "you" to the personal pronoun "I." Just as the writing lacks foregrounding, it lacks distancing. The degree of objectivity achieved here is equivalent to the second rank of Wilkinson's scale: the emotion is so strongly felt that it is barely evaluated.

One script like this is sufficient to illustrate writing in which the emotionalism is immediate. Now we can move along the scale to writing in which the emotionalism is objectified by being embodied in a literary (or would-be literary) artifact. The next piece, consisting of a combination of prose and verse, illustrates the use of foregrounding for this purpose:

> If you have to ask someone when they are happiest, they will probably tell you that it is when they are remembering or sharing some happy time with someone. Most times you will find that happiness can be found in the simplest of things, for example, an ice cream cone rapidly melting while you are sitting in a roller coaster, spraying white flecks over everything, or wading in a stream after a long walk, drinking coffee under a blanket inside, while it is pouring with rain outside. You are probably thinking of warm and happy experiences yourself at the moment. These experiences, however, are probably ones that you actually experienced. Memories, therefore, play a large part in our lives. They often reflect our personalities, feelings, thoughts and ideas. Most times they are happy, sometimes they are sad remnants of happy times.
>
> MEMORIES. . . .
> Wrapped in gaily-coloured paper,
> too painful to be treasured,
> yet too precious to be discarded.
> Magazine clippings . . .
> Of times left behind;
> shared together in eternity;
> too unhappy to be remembered,
> yet too beautiful to be discarded.
> I return to this -

This writing makes careful use of the language medium to create certain effects. The attention to style identifies it as "poetic," in the sense used by Jakobson (1971), and, after him, Britton (Britton et al., 1975): the formal properties of language, such as sounds and rhythms, are deliberately employed to augment the merely denotative value of the words. The features of foregrounding for which we can look are indicated by Hawkes (1977, p. 81):

> By the use of complex inter-relationships, by emphasizing resemblances and by promoting through repetition "equivalences" or "parallelisms" of sound, stress, image (and) rhyme, poetry patterns and "thickens" language, "foregrounding" its formal qualities, and consequently "backgrounding" its capacity for sequential, discursive and referential meaning.

The prose portion of "memories" creates parallel patterns with its sequence of words ending in -ing: "melting," "sitting," "spraying," "wading," "drinking," and "pouring." The verse portion uses epigrams and elliptical sentences in a style which is very different from normal prose.

Stylised literary writing such as this is to be expected from proficient writers at this age and even younger children, but the ability to write in this way can be a fairly superficial skill, not necessarily denoting an advanced maturity of thought. In making the writing less personally expressive, the writers may take refuge in the anonymity of cliche, which consists of language that has lost its meaning and exempts writers from the obligation of personal commitment. On the other hand, mature writers disengage themselves in a way that stresses their own individuality, by taking a stance from which they view themselves. A measure of this distancing is that the mood of the writing differs from the mood that the writer is describing. In "When Everything Goes Wrong," the writer is still feeling a "black, ugly, blotchy freak" while writing, whereas in distanced writing, the writer adopts a particular tone which is a comment on the original feeling.

The particular moods upon which the young writers in my sample chose to look back objectively are among the most typical moods of adolescence. They write of times that are funny or sad; when they are sorry for themselves, or romantic and lovesick, or naive and enthusiastic; when they are suffering from ennui; when they make fools of themselves; and when they act unthinkingly, in conformity with group norms or the pressures of the mass media. These foibles of their adolescence are looked back upon and "placed" by the young people through writing about them from particular standpoints, the most striking of which is an attitude of wry humour.

The best examples of this approach are to be found in the girls' journals. Here is an account by one of her visit to an exclusive nightclub:

> MY NIGHT OUT AT RAFFLES
>
> A chance in a lifetime comes along. You accept, for no one would turn down the change of going to Raffles, the most exclusive nightclub/discotheque on the top floor of Durban's newest beachfront hotel.
>
> Way above the beachfront, above reality, you forget your troubles on the way up. The slow scenic journey up the outside of the new Maharani Hotel prepares you for a fantastic evening—a sparkling occasion in more ways than one.
>
> The beautiful gold door stands before you; you take a deep breath, a quick glance back over your shoulder at the black immensity of sea, the few, and now inferior lights of Durban; you smile and walk into Raffles.
>
> Suddenly you're 18 years of age, no longer a "teenybopper", for Raffles is for the rich, and elite. As you enter, you find yourself reflected thousands of times, large and small. As you walk, your images follow. It's dazzling to look around, mirrors flash; windows slant outwards so that when you look down, the world seems to be below you; and the carpets create elegance.
>
> We're escorted to a small but luxuriously comfortable table on the dance floor and once again you're able to explore the surroundings.
>
> A discotheque like Raffles is an ideal place to go if you're not really interested in your partner as there are plenty of

> interesting people to watch and besides that, the music is so loud you can't really hear him anyway.
>
> The sound of popping champagne corks provides the beat, and the mirrors reflect the dance of the clinking glasses. "Saturday Night Fever" begins and the dance floor disappears. The moving, flashing figure of Raffles, reflected on the diamond-shaped dance floor, comes alive and writhes beneath the dancing feet.
>
> In fact everyone is "Staying Alive" and all over "John Travoltas" and "Stephanie De Sykes" are being reproduced rapidly.
>
> The "Night Fever" spreads as the pulsating rhythm vibrates through you and you are caught up in the "Disco Inferno"—totally hypnotised.
>
> Instead of sweet nothings being whispered in your ear, people are shouting, "You're More than a Woman."
>
> Up round the bar the humour and drinks harmonise until someone gives you that look that says, "You should be dancing."
>
> From "Jive Talking" to "Beethoven's 5th," there's no difference in musical years; they're on the same plane as long as they're from "Saturday Night Fever." The tempo is turned down but it's still the Bee Gees all the way with "How Deep is your Love?" At this stage of the evening it's an important question for some; they'll be staying on until 4:00 a.m. But all too soon the red "pumpkin lift" arrives, the gold doors open as you, feeling like Cinderella, slowly descend to reality once again.

Her control of the distancing effect is immediately apparent from her use of the generalised pronoun "you" and the present tense: though writing about her own experience, she makes it universal, saying that this is typically how a teenage girl would behave in these circumstances. She is wryly conscious of her own feelings at the time—how she refused to be overwhelmed by her surroundings (though it was a near thing), and instead revelled in their grandeur. She conveys her smugness through the understatement of the third paragraph (the "now inferior lights of Durban"; "you smile and walk into Raffles"). Her puns on the song titles debunk her own romantic dreams of "sweet nothings," and point the social comedy of the girls whose romances and staying power are not as spontaneous as they would like to think.

In the "Raffles" piece, the writer actually finds herself in glamorous surroundings, and her wryness is prompted by the reflection that, although she apparently carries the evening off well, she does not really belong there. But our young people do not often have the opportunity to move in these circles: they admire the rich and famous from a distance, and can only indulge in fantasies of glamour and romance. It is the irony of the discrepancy between reality and fantasy, or between the everyday world of the school pupil and the world of glossy magazines, that attracts the satirical attention of our writers:

The air was clear, the early morning haze scorched away by summer--approaching sun. The slightly paler sky seemed to have settled closer around the earth, a comforting protector against the unknown, all-seeing space.

The strengthening light reflected bravely off large, dark sunglasses, and was splintered, forming six satellite suns. The eyes, hidden behind their one-way mirrors, shielded by the suns, regarded the scene with calm, impersonal security.

The white-blonde arrogance of the hair defiantly tossed the light back to the infinite blue sky.

The skin, no longer as taut as in youth, was tanned a deep, rich colour; the only part of the body that had visibly lost its battle with the sun.

The mouth, a firm, straight line, strangely gave the impression of constant amusement at some private joke on mankind; a joke shared only by a select, terrible few.

The body was moulded into the chair, exuding an air of complete, casual control.

I watched, fascinated. The constant knowledge of being in sight of a personal "demi-god" filled me, inescapably drawing my eyes across the ten metre wide, eternally deep chasm.

—The instant recognition. The feeling of enormous admiration, awe and respect, magnified out of proportion by constant deifying. The feeling of love, glibly explained away to myself as a simple idolatry. . . .

The horror of realizing that the deep bond of friendship and mutual understanding that existed between us, in fact existed only in my head. The shock of knowing that I did not exist more than as a fleeting image—seen and then discarded—through the one-way glass—

I realized that my only possible course of action was to dispel the illusion completely.

I looked across the gulf at the figure, a hand was raised, removed the glasses, carelessly extinguishing the suns. I approached, like a moth to a flame, knowing that I would be burnt, yet unable to resist the thought forcing me forward. I felt myself being examined impersonally, like a defenceless butterfly, pinned onto a piece of cardboard. The eyes, free of their protective shields, were timelessly ice-grey. They suddenly combined with the mouth to return my smile, an astonishingly beautiful sight. In that instant I saw the reason for the silent amusement of the mouth—I became one of the select few. I walked away secure in that knowledge.

The life-giving sunlight warmed the clean spring air, giving warning of the approaching summer.

This piece exemplifies Wilkinson's highest category of writing on self, in that it conveys the writer's "awareness of the springs and complexities of emotion." The controlled structure of the piece indicates how much the writer is in control of her insights. She begins with a section in which the first person does not feature at all, so that the reader may experience the same impact that the unexpected confrontation with the celebrity had on her, unintroduced, unheralded. The close observation of the celebrity elicits far more than telling details of appearance such as the description of the skin as "no longer as taut as in youth": suggestive details build up the feeling of this person's self-sufficiency, repelling outsiders: "light reflected . . . was splintered," "the white-blonde arrogance of the hair." Then follows the second part, analysing the writer's reaction. We are taken through its stages, leading to her deliberately exposing herself to the likelihood of a snub, and, because she has withheld the outcome from her readers, we share her surprise at the sudden smile just as we shared her shock of recognition at the beginning. We realise then the full appropriateness of the image of the sun, which recurs in the passage, identifying the celebrity with the sun progressively more closely, except for the moment of truth when the eyes are ice grey, only to explode into life-giving sunlight. Without wishing to make excessive claims for this writing, I find Coleridge's (1817, p. 177) words an appropriate account of the way distancing succeeds here:

> . . . the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader; the rapid flow, the quick change and the playful nature of the thoughts and images, and, above all, the alienation and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter aloofness of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst.

The quality of playfulness is also to be found in some of the peer-audience writing. Of the few pieces of really high-spirited writing directed to other pupils, one piece stands out precisely because of its distancing, for, whereas other writers glibly chatter about themselves in school argot, this particular writer deliberately uses slang to depict herself as an excitable, romantic teenager: (I quote the first half.)

> Dear Friend
>
> I am not exactly sure how I must start my letter or what it must contain. I hope that you will find some interest in what I am going to write.
>
> Firstly I'm a girl with green eyes and fair hair. I'm not a very bright pupil and judging from the standard of our class, I need help and fast. You see, we have got quite a number of snobs and real "hoity toity" people in our class. But then I suppose you can't win them all.
>
> I do ballet and modern dancing. I've done ballet for twelve years and I'm busy doing elementary at the moment. I love ballet but I have only one complaint, point work. My toes feel almost as though they've reached their end (shame). At the moment I'm sitting here crossed-legged on the carpet in my bedroom with toes wrapped up in plaster. I only started to do modern dancing about two months ago and I'm having a ball. The only problem is that I'm sore all over. We only get into crazy positions when doing modern dancing.
>
> I play, or should I say, try to play netball. I'm in our open B team. It's a fantastic team. We all get along like a house on

> fire (well almost, anyway). We haven't won all our matches but then that doesn't matter to us, we just have our good time and never mind the rest. I would like to try my hand at diving this term, but only on one condition, that the ambulance stands ready.
>
> Some of my teachers work on my nerves. Our Afrikaans and Maths teachers just don't seem to teach properly. I've given them up as a bad, very bad job. But then we get my Accountancy teacher, he's a dream. All the girls in our school swoon every time they see him, then you must try and do Accountancy when he teaches you. Never, it just doesn't work. No wonder I am forever getting red rings on my report.
>
> Seeing as I'm on the subject of guys, I'll tell you about the one I'm madly in love with. He's in matric at our school and he has got fair hair and blue, blue eyes. He's very good-looking and of course he makes my heart beat faster everytime I see him. Oops, better not get too romantic or I'll soon be drawing a picture of him for you.

Noteworthy examples of the argot are the use of "only" in "We only get into crazy positions when doing modern dancing," and "just" in "I just love that team." She says later that she reads "tons of Mills and Boon" love stories—and she uses her reading to good effect by deliberately using the arch language of that sort of novel to highlight the conventionality of her schoolgirl crushes: "But then we get my Accountancy teacher, he's a dream."; "Seeing I'm on the subject of guys, I'll tell you about the one I'm madly in love with." The most obvious technique that she uses to distance herself is authorial intrusion: "My toes feel almost as though they've reached their end (shame)"; "It's a fantastic team, we all get along like a house on fire (well almost, anyway)"; "He's very good looking and of course he makes my heart beat faster every time I see him. Oops, better not get too romantic. . . ." The preciousness of the last remark is a deliberate placing of the whole passage, presenting it as though it were from a magazine for teenage girls.

From spirited writing about the silliness of adolescence, we move to quieter, more philosophical reflections. In the last two pieces of writing which I wish to discuss, the effect of the distancing is clearly to help the writer understand and come to terms with the experience described. If the experience is authentic, what we are witnessing is writing performing the healing function so highly esteemed by Holbrook. Whitehead (1966, pp. 184-185), who, as we have seen, has reservations about this emphasis, acknowledges that writing can have a cathartic effect:

> There is the piece of writing which has been, for the child himself, therapeutic. An opportunity has been provided for the writer to work over, in words, some acutely felt experience from his own past life, usually one which was so disturbing at the time that it was hard to assimilate. . . . As we can often sense in the texture of the writing, the child finds unmistakable cathartic value in going back over the emotions which once agitated him, and in bringing order into them through the controlling medium of the written word; the benefit is analogous, in its own lesser degree, to that which comes from "working through" past experience in the course of psychoanalytic treatment.

That something of this nature is the function of the passages referred to below is apparent, especially if we bear in mind that the writers freely chose their own topics.

Equally, if the experiences recounted are fictional, the writing may have a helpful psychological function, in that the writers may be trying out, in fantasy, possibilities of experience that they may one day encounter. Marjorie Hourd (1949, p. 73) values highly the deep emotional benefit gained by the child in "coming to terms with one's environment" in this way: it helps him to reconcile "the meeting of man's solitary psyche with the reality of life outside him." I do not wish to dwell on the possible functions of the passages which I discuss below, because without knowing the personal circumstances of the writers one can only speculate; but one can appreciate the management of feelings which the distancing achieves.

We see this in another script by the girl who encountered the celebrity behind the dark glasses. In "Leaving" she wryly recounts her failure to hide her emotion when she and her parents saw her sister off at the airport:

LEAVING

> I've hated airports for as long as I can remember. . . .
>
> I stood between mother and sister, trying to look happy while not looking at anyone in particular. A furtive sideways glance a moment previously had told me how the others were taking it. My mother was talking earnestly over my head to my sister about minute possibilities that we had all been going over for the past two months. My father was staring stoically ahead, looking very manly—or he would have if I hadn't seen the tear trickling its way down his cheek. "The emotional type," I thought disgustedly, giving the rest of my face a good wipe as I pretended to blow my nose. My eyes fastened on the large digital clock above the luggage counter, and I mentally raced it to the minutes. Without my absorbing the minutes, time passed and I was shocked when I heard the flight announced.
>
> Of course we all jumped to our feet and my father and I fought over who'd carry the hand luggage the last few feet to the barrier.
>
> "You sure you'll be all right by yourself?"
>
> "Bit late now to worry about that," I muttered sourly, but my sister only nodded tearfully. I gave her a black look. What had she to cry about?
>
> Then the goodbye-kissing started. I gritted my teeth and practised my freeze-at-twenty-paces glare on the back of an unsuspecting voluptuous lady in a black coat.
>
> True is the saying "act in haste; repent at leisure" for frequently have I cursed myself for the great loss of dignity I suffered, finding myself hugging goodbye with as much feeling as the worst of them.
>
> Finally it was all over and we were in the car returning to a strangely silent home.

> "Really," I said, vigorously blowing my nose again in the darkness, "by the way you all acted, you'd think she was going for good."

From the vantage point of retrospect, she gently ridicules her attempts to deny both to herself and her family that she was upset. Her method is to exploit the irony of how she projected her self-disgust on to those around her: "'The emotional type,' I thought disgustedly, giving the rest of my face a good wipe"; "I gave her a black look. What had she to cry about?"; the glare she gave the "voluptuous lady"; and the finale:

> "Really," I said, vigorously blowing my nose again in the darkness. "By the way you all acted, you'd think she was going for good."

A sombreness of tone accompanies the melancholy subject matter of the last piece of writing, by one of the girls in her journal. Her theme is the break-up of a boy/girl relationship, and it illustrates the management of feeling through self-awareness.

HELLO AND GOODBYE

> "Hello."
>
> "Hello Lorna. This is Lindsay."
>
> "Lindsay?"
>
> "Yes, Lindsay Adie. You must remember me."
>
> "Oh yes, of course. How are you?"
>
> Brown wavy hair, friendly green eyes. How could I possibly forget, even if we haven't seen each other for well over a year now?
>
> "Fine thanks. I just got back from doing my final training down in Kimberley."
>
> "Oh. That's nice."
>
> I remember the day you left to go to the army I cried, even though I tried not to. But we agreed to write often so that the time would pass quickly.
>
> "I spent three months on the border."
>
> "Oh."
>
> You wrote often at first, but your letters became more and more infrequent.
>
> "I was also in South West for two months."
>
> Then you wrote and told me about Caroline and I understood everything.
>
> "I phoned to ask if you are busy on Saturday. I thought maybe we could go somewhere and talk about old times."
>
> "Um, actually I am busy."
>
> Very busy. Doing my homework and washing my hair.
>
> "What about Sunday then?"
>
> "I'm going out the whole day."
>
> Another lie.
>
> "Next weekend?"
>
> "No, sorry."
>
> I heard that Caroline has found someone else now and that you are free again.
>
> "I guess that means you don't want to come out with me?"
>
> "I guess not."

> Of course I do, but you hurt me before and my pride won't let me get hurt again. Not by you at any rate.
>
> "Well, thanks a lot anyway."
>
> "Thank you."
>
> I do want to go out with you again. There might be other Carolines though, and I can't go through the loneliness and tears again.
>
> "Bye for now, Lorna."
>
> "Bye Lindsay."
>
> Goodbye.

This shows that the writer is capable of expressing in words an "awareness of the springs and complexities of emotion." Her writing on this theme is her most stylised and experimental, so that her feelings are objectified not only by her stance but by literary form and style. For example, the way that she intersperses her unspoken thoughts among the spoken parts of the conversation is sheer artifice. The silent remarks are the part which illustrate best her objectivity, for they are not a record of her spontaneous thoughts at the time of the conversation, but a sophisticated rationalisation, formulated in retrospect:

> I do want to go out with you again. There might be other Carolines though, and I can't go through the loneliness and tears again.

She exploits the verbal effects to the maximum in the conclusion, where the casual greeting, "Bye," is followed by the finality of the unspoken "Goodbye." In this writing, artifice and control of feelings combine in that "reconciliation of form and meaning" which only the best writing achieves, and which Marjorie Hourd (1949, p. 115) has said is "the final aim of the teacher who gives scope for original composition in prose and verse."

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATION: CALL FOR PAPERS

Utah State University will host the first annual Rocky Mountain Writing Center Conference on June 10, 1983. We are inviting proposals for one-hour workshops or 20-minute presentations. Possible topics include computers in the writing center, research, materials, administration, staffing, tutor training, and writing centers in the public schools. One-page proposals or completed papers are welcomed, preferably by April 1, 1983. The keynote speaker will be Judith Fishman of Queens College. Author of THE RANDOM HOUSE GUIDE TO BASIC WRITING and RESPONDING TO PROSE: A READER FOR WRITERS, Judith directed the Writing Skills Workshop at Queens for over seven years and worked directly with New York City high school teachers on the Queens English Project. Send proposals and requests for more information for Joyce Kinkead, Writing Center Director, Department of English, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322.

THE "MIDDLETOWN SPIRIT"—CATALYST TOWARD COSMOPOLITANISM

James P. Beck

In late August, they take the first big (actually small) step in leaving home, leaving the Village, the state's towns which produced them—and which have coocooned them for seventeen years now. To the Big University they troop, healthy, stylishly garbed, basically agreeable, and of course feeling modishly sophisticated, surely at the pinnacle of progress.

But of course, despite electronic one-worldliness, the Freshmen are still moving—in September, green as corn—in an immense cloud of provincialities.

True awareness is yet foreign to them, in re complexity; diversity; multiplicity; relativity; and subtleties in re life and ideas—especially in re "ideologies," every group's and nation's cherished (but arbitrary and restrictive) beliefs and values as to what is true/false, good/bad about the world.

Some such cosmopolitanism they'll of course absorb by simple osmosis over the next four years, emerging rough-polished in cap and gown as quite workable products. But we teachers—especially of English as a true liberal art—may well have a mandate to faciliate valid sophistication. And yet, how to do this? Not by simply telling them that "each human group has its usually unconscious but very influential habits and values which can be restrictive as well as useful." That'd be about as effective as just telling a fish, "well, you actually live in water, see? . . ." ("'Water' . . .?")

For a decade now, a certain unlikely teaching resource has worked extraordinarily well in helping me gently woo, blast, and pry freshmen loose from the bedrock of "indigenous provinciality." (So well that I must share it now.)

In the 1930's, the humanistic sociologists Helen and Merrill Lynd thoroughly studied Muncie, Indiana and produced the classic work Middletown in Transition. Its Ch. 12, "The Middletown Spirit," is at first glance only a roster of 188 ideologies the inhabitants held. In fact, this roster is marvelous catalyst for helping me achieve some of the complex goals of English taught as a liberal art:

(1) In composition, the replacing of platitudes and truisms (Engfish and cliches) with authentic, truth-telling, original insights at last.

(2) In issue-units, those dealing with the-individual-and-society, the awareness of the great force of tradition—of culture as corset, the often-counterproductive "cake of custom."

(3) In literature, an appreciation of how quality works offer a world-view more morally realistic (if at first more "strange," as in poetry) than the safe-sunny-spurious "received" view of the mainstream culture.

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(4) In reading and writing reasoning and argument, the awareness of how "most so-called reasoning is actually rationalizing," specifically in the spontaneous defense of our cherished preconceptions—often the group's "official-respectable" ideologies, those "of course." statements.

Early in English 101, where and as appropriate, I hand out a ditto of about one-third of the 188 trenchant laws, which I've carefully selected. These mandates distill traditional (but unrealistic and limited) beliefs and attitudes which are specifically American (such as effort-optimism; individuality, but also community conformity; anti-intellectual pragmatic materialism; puritan morality; humanitarianism; and the like). But the "Spirit" also shows the generally human tendency of many social groups' "received vision" to be apparently safe and friendly, but actually a bit stunted, constricted, fearful of the new-and-different, hypocritical also, and tunnel-visioned in many ways. The "Spirit" is admirable benchmark for other units in the English course therefore.

Perusing the ditto, then, the students see that Middletown believes in being an "average man" (sic), having character instead of having brains. That "progress is the law of life," that "size indicates progress," and that abrupt social planning—and also changing "too fast"—are "unnatural." That evils will cure themselves: "in the end all things will mend," and relatedly, "good will solves most problems"; while optimism, of course, assists progress, "the orderly forces making for good." That people should put their family, community, state, and nation first—ahead of big cities, Japanese, Negroes, Jews (Muncie then was 90% white and 95% Protestant). That "American business will always lead the world," and that "any man willing to work can get a job." That the monogamous family is the sacred, keystone institution of society (Of Course.), and also that "men should behave like men, and women like women." The "Spirit" at this point lays down a dozen rigid gender-role commandments for a pre-feminist (and also pre-Men's Lib) era.

Nor would Middletown study its own "Spirit" in all its own schools; for, "the schools should teach the facts of past experience about which 'sound, intelligent people agree'" and also "it is dangerous to acquaint children with points of view which question 'the fundamentals'". Enough said—though the "Spirit" then says much more—about schoolteachers as failed job-seekers, about culture and leisure as inferior to hard work, about snobbishness vs. common-man appreciativeness, and about democracy and communism and charity and Christianity and so forth. Middletown was against the reverse of this whole dismal litany, condemning the non-joiner, the divergent personality, "anybody who criticizes any fundamental institution"—also "anybody who knows too much" (!), or who works for change.

This briefly is Middletown's recipe-for-living: narrow, ungenerous, actually dangerous, though the city's folk surely neither intended—nor recognized—that fact. You can see how reading the "Spirit" can be for many adolescents their first challenging of the culture-blindness in which we all grow up. It can be an encounter with "culture shock" without foreign travel; a look at the spiritual world-view behind (not just the literal almanac-facts about) the nation's history. And indeed a glance at the "Spirit" has seemed timely in English 101 for two reasons: current national culture, and perennial stages of adolescent psychological-philosophical development. In the Eighties, America's "right turn" toward neo-simplistic conservative thinking deserves counterbalancing through education. And, in adolescence, students are right at the point of exchanging a simplistic world-view of either-ors and fixed absolutes for a window upon more relativity, diversity, complexity—a cosmopolitanism of sorts.

In any event, the "Spirit" is a minor "event" in every class I've ever used it in. Students respond variously—but respond they always do. Some say, "Is this some joke?" Some protest: "Why are we reading this outdated stuff: things have changed now." Others immediately counter that with "a lot of this is just like today." (And indeed, Time of 16 October 1978 notes that the followup study Middletown III finds that "American life has not changed very much in 50 years—or at least the kind of American life lived in a town like Muncie.") The "Spirit" can help keep inquiry alive in the problematic Eighties. When we discuss Middletown on male and female gender-roles, nowadays some freer-raised women pipe up to protest the chauvinistic statements which some of the "guys," still traditional males, chorus in to defend. But overall, the class's thrust becomes this: "How can a town be so narrow-minded really?" Which is grist for discussions. . . .

After distributing the dittoed anthology of the "Spirit," I usually have students do a brief "lab" on it. The following probe-questions are the ones that have always worked over a decade of use. Students briefly comment on them in writing for discussion. (1) Compare Middletown and one's home town. Different? Similar? (2) Identify which beliefs and values have changed the most--and which the least? (This will be interesting: The Chronicle of Higher Education of 17 March 1982 reports that a modern sociological study, Middletown Families, reports that "despite the official wisdom about the disruptions caused during the last two generations by wars, civil disturbances, corruption in government, and economic recession, the Muncie of the 1970's is fundamentally the same place it was in the 1920's.") (3) Which beliefs and values are useful, but which might harmfully retard individual growth, and social progress too? (4) Which of these ideologies (if any.) are "absolutes" (always true everywhere) and which are "relatives" (depending on situation)? Would Middletown agree with our opinion here? (5) "America emphasizes free-spirit individualism, also warm equality between people." But does M. practice what it preaches here? (Students say no in thunder here.) (6) Relatedly, which ideologies actually contradict other ideologies, and how could this cause trouble for people? Is there a way out of this culture-conflict? (7) And finally, are "we" today sophisticated, freed from such crimping norms and mores—or in what ways are we all in a sort of "middletown" today, and always?

Discussion of these leads to "sociocultural perspective." This is a good chance for cooperative interdisciplinary work; here there's no conflict between the literary artist as Truthteller, and the humanistic 10% of sociology-and-anthropology which analogously debunks our fond cultural credos. Thus: the perspective (of both fields) affirms that (1) society is random; our culture patterns and values "just happen" in history; we can't intend or control them as much as we think we do. (2) An ironic difference exists between the "ideal" and the "real" culture (normative vs. behavioral)--what we say, and what we do and really believe. (3) Culture is narrow: each group's economics, politics, religion, and gender-roles vary no more than from M to N on a cross-cultural and historical world scale of A to Z possibilities. We are all culture-bound. (4) But each society and culture is at times counter-productive—our ideologies do aid group survival, but may crimp individual growth, social well-being (culture has been called the "standardization of error"). (5) Finally, the sociocultural milieu is doubly constricting. Externally, social control and taboos keep us from transgressing the norms (also from even thinking about alternatives). Then, the norms get internalized, and we voluntarily conform, needing to belong. All these insights are humanistic—implicative, significant—not just oversimple scientism; see Peter Berger's Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective (1963) to such fearless debunking of ignorances.

Next, the "Spirit" has helped students appreciate literature as such, since so much fiction and poetry deals with person-vs.-society. Protagonists tangle with the strands of the social network, and finally break free—or, don't. And as for poetry? Poetry rubs against Middletown's every ingrained grain. Poetry is impractical. It isn't productive. It's eggheadedly difficult, aesthetic and unmasculine too. And especially it's non-optimistic—real poetry, anyhow (not Middletown's favorite brand of literature, "mild" poetry for the ladies, and then popular escapist melodrama with lightweight themes and of course happy endings. . . .)

But ah, when I juxtapose Middletown's superficialities with the world-views of some wacky, wilder modern verse, poetry comes off the winner for some students. Much poetry takes the "outsider" stance after all, criticizing the "official-respectable" view of reality in the pulpits, Chamber of Commerce brochures, and yes—traditional classrooms in school. The "wilder" stance of much true poetry of course sees life as not all safe-and-sane; not all clear, but murky; evil as well as good; antagonistic not just harmonious; wayward not controlled; complex not simple; multiple not dual-valued (right/wrong, true/false). Things are various. And much poetry, upsetting the traditional applecart of prim expectations, offers "moral realism." It can tell truths which psychologically we don't want to hear, which sociologically we're not supposed to acknowledge, but which existentially it's realistic to reckon with after all. Too often, students still think that anything not 100% optimistic, is "too pessimistic." But much good poetry takes tragedy's view: among the good there's bad, but seen in seasoned realism, not simple cynicism—let alone Middletown's threadbare sentimentality.

So I juxtapose the prim-proper "Spirit" with a gallery of un-usual poetry. I try: (1) whatever zippy, "wilder" modern verse is working well with the students currently. (2) Some traditional Asian proverbs from W. S. Merwin's Asian Figures (Atheneum, 1973), which are little kernels of uncompromisingly realistic insight about The Way Things (and People) Really Are. (3) A couple dozen of Stephen Crane's puzzling poems which debunk our fond hopes and dangerous illusions, but with wry saving wit. Cull your own crop from Collected Poems, and Crane should work very well with twelfth-graders, maybe bright classes earlier. (4) Ambrose Bierce's Devil's Dictionary punctures pretense, corrects naivete. (5) The graffiti of the Sixties is less "gross" than wittily incisive. See Robert Reisner's Encyclopedia of Graffiti (Macmillan, 1974) for brash but refreshing questionings of Effort, Optimism, and Progress as well-nigh inevitable. (6) Finally, pair up conventionally-"mild" and insightfully-"wild" poetry on the same topics such as babies; mothers; couples; and death. Hallmark-Card style verse about "only a baby small, . . . but to us how dear," proper polite and emptily-cliched, pales in juxtaposition with more robust stuff about infants as strangers (see "The Stranger" by Adrienne Rich), overweight mothers who slug gin but who are worthy nevertheless (George Barker's "To My Mother"), honest antagonisms between couples about carrying out the garbage—and more, and of course death faced in hokey sentimentality—versus uncompromisingly direct (many poems here, not to mention Eberhart's "To a Lamb").

In this poetry unit I am always both disappointed and gratified—invariably. Many students resolutely do cling to Middletown's fluffy preferences. But many others see poetry as wilder-side walkings which do tell Truths, after all. If "the culture" pronounces pomposities from a haughty podium, artistic gadflies can heckle from under the bleachers. Since kids do prefer authenticity to plastic phoniness, this poetry unit works well, elevating poetry by contrast.

Finally, the "Spirit" has always helped me cinch two important points in teaching the critical reading of argument, the writing of effective persuasion. First, most of our so-called reasoning is simply "rationalizing," not looking at facts and then making conclusions but rather starting with our conclusions—our culture's cherished ideologies included here.—and finding facts to support them. Thus, the underlying American world-view may influence how we feel about the space race (progress; materialism), women's rights (rigid gender-roles), capital punishment and gun control (frontier mentality), welfare (rugged individualism). Some students can grasp the concept that our conventionalities sway our argumentation even as a hidden sidewise current can sweep a boat off its course.

Second, these ideologies are not the perfect way of knowing truths that they seem. Major "ways of knowing" include of course science (current summaries on an issue by representative experts in the field); religion; the sheer majority opinion (as in polls); and of course the ideologies: traditional culture, or "what everyone knows." Students do not easily distinguish among these four. They confuse our "right to your own opinion" on an issue, with our responsibility to think objectively. They lapse into excessive relativism of an uncritical "well, who's to say?" response. However—science is a better guide here than cultural ideologies, which know so many things which just aren't so (about Blacks, foreigners, male and female roles, change, etc.) Thus, in mulling over issues such as the E.R.A., TV violence and children, the metric system, and the like, students can see that Middletown's handy assumptions can be "standardizations of error," and that current assessments by scientific experts—while hardly secure—are probably more valid.

So the "Spirit" has helped my classes understand things about the individual as social puppet; good literature (and humanistic social "science") as critiquing the received world-view in dynamic ways; and much of our reasoning as not that. The "Spirit" has been for me a grand touchstone; benchmark; yardstick; catalyst. May it serve others as well.

NOTE

For the "Spirit," see Middletown in Transition, by Helen and Merrill Lynd, 1932, Harbrace paperback 1963; also pp. 48-64 in Lewis Coser's anthology The Pleasures of Sociology (Mentor, 1980).

ADOLESCENT STUDENTS: ALLOWING FOR STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CLASSROOM

Suzanne Padgett

Recognizing ther uniqueness and the special characteristics of a class population is a requisite for the classroom teacher. The teacher is the key to the establishment of a comfortable learning situation. She must act as authority figure, peer and friend, counselor, and motivator for the students. She must set goals that develop student confidence, allowing individualization to meet personal needs and abilities. She must gather ideas from a wide variety of sources to create better plans and must be flexible enough to be willing to deviate from the plans. She must be concerned with the classroom environment, using available furniture and resource material in a variety of ways. She must use a wide variety of teaching methods, allowing flexibility and adaptability to the needs of the class. She must enjoy her work and encourage similar enthusiasm and activity in her students. She must be an efficient planner, preparing for identification of student needs and problems, formulation of objectives, selection of learning experiences and methods to approach them, and evaluation of outcome. This kind of teacher is a professional, one who has or will seek out specialized training in education beyond her level of expertise. She will read widely from varied sources, will attend workshops and seminars that will enhance her work, and will encourage others she works with to do the same. She will join professional groups and organizations to expand her intake of influences and resources. She will make use of expertise around her, drawing on specialists for advice and classroom participation. She will work to raise the status of her profession by local and statewide activity and by political influence on certification requirements. She will have a lengthy period of specialized training and will apply the theory and research she studies in her classroom practices. She will be, in essence, committed to her work and her profession, evidencing this in the services she renders and in the responsibilities she assumes.

After this description of such a paragon of virtue, it is hard to imagine anything or any one that might stall her efforts. All it takes is a head-on confrontation with a room full of junior-high age adolescents—those squirrelly, changeable, often irrational wonders of nature. The only characteristic that the teacher can count on from them is their changeability, their refusal or inability to be constant in anything. What then can this poor woman do in the face of such a situation? Rather than capitulate to the problem, the paragon we met earlier will capitalize on her knowledge of character traits of this unique population and will plan her classroom lessons to take advantage of the students' changeability. She will call on her understanding of their needs and interests and will allow for these in the classroom.

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Among the many character traits she may have to deal with are the following:

1. Showing a wide range of physiological changes, a new inward-looking interest in their own bodies and personalities;
2. Highly influenced by peer pressure;
3. Moody, restless, unsettled, distracted, and easily tired;
4. Curious, inquisitive, enjoying fantasy;
5. Exhibiting extremes of behavior, from sophisticated to childlike;
6. Independent, pulling away from family and adult control;
7. Under pressure to succeed; and
8. Placing school work behind social life and the trying out of new relationships.

These characteristics can be dealt with in lesson planning so that the lessons incorporate these attitudes and traits rather than work against them. In planning a unit on poetry, for instance, our model teacher might allow for these characteristics and plan lessons such as the following examples illustrate.

1. A wide range of physiological changes and new inward-looking interests are perhaps the most obviously seen and the most difficult characteristics to deal with. One option that works in any kind of classroom and with any kind of population is the use of a journal by each student. Because of the individualized nature of each journal, the teacher can get feedback on needs and interests of individual students. This can be a source of private information for the teacher and a source of release for the student who is concerned with personal exploration and private questions. The journal can be directed to reflect on the nature of the class or lesson, or it can be left open to the needs of the student—a safe place for expression that is not evaluated or discredited by an outside party. I often use this in classes with the only method of evaluation being a grade for quantity and frequency of writing, not for any grammatical or content criteria. This is one way of giving the student a place to be valued for personal effort, a place of success, while simultaneously allowing the opportunity for self-expression without dispute, a situation hard to find in the life of an adolescent. The teacher can also offer students the option of marking certain pages private, not to be read even by the teacher.

2. Students this age are highly influenced by peer pressure. As they struggle to find their own opinions and attitudes, they tend to reflect those of the people around them until they become more certain of their own beliefs. One way in which the teacher can help in this search for a personal code and can work

to detach the student from the biased perspective of peer pressure is to give the student some tools of critical evaluation and some resources to use in the examination of external stimuli. The media are a prime example of the effect of outside pressure and can be used to examine advertising approaches and their effect on the population. The teacher can present information on such approaches as brand loyalty, the bandwagon effect, hero worship, status appeal, humor, personal attractiveness, economy, luxury, and convenience. By examining magazine and newspaper articles, the class can identify and apply the new information they have learned and can discuss the intent and effectiveness of each approach. These ideas can then be applied to poems read in class to determine the poet's intended audience, desired effect, and means of handling the language and the reader. While this gives the students an avenue into poetry, it also allows the development of the critical process and gives the students tools to apply in other situations. This process of critical thinking is invaluable not only to adolescents but to adults, too.

3. Adolescents are often moody, restless, unsettled, distracted, and easily bored and tired. The teacher would have little success in presenting a series of unfamiliar and obscure poems to a class with a limited attention span. More successful would be a variety of stimuli, designed to attract interest in various ways and to incorporate students' interests as well. Rather than just presenting a poem as a complete entity, the teacher could contrast the piece with other media that deal with the same idea or theme. One example is the Anne Sexton poem, "The Starry Night." Sexton based her poem on the Vincent Van Gogh painting, "Starry Night," which could be shown in class and contrasted with the written form for differences in interpretation between the two artists and among the students. Also appropriate would be the playing of the Don McLean song, "Vincent," a ballad composed to the memory of Van Gogh. This medium is one which is more familiar to the students and might further invite their participation in class discussion. A variety of stimuli like these can offer new and different ideas to the students, while offering such a range of media that there is more chance a student can find a way of entering the activity on a personal level.

4. Curiosity and inquisitiveness are two hallmarks of the growing and changing child. This might be taken advantage of in the classroom, especially in a poetry unit. Often confused by a simple exposure to the written form, students are eager to learn more about the people behind the piece. It often helps to give biographical information about the authors and to play recordings of the poets reading their own work or to invite poets to visit the classroom. Often these explorations into the "real" lives of people and the new perspective on the written forms do much to add to the understanding of the literature. Recorded songs can also be studied as another variation.

5. Adolescents often demonstrate extremes of behavior, from very sophisticated to very childlike, They can often be confused in these extremes because they do not know how and when the changes will occur. They cannot be relied upon to respond to situations in a consistent manner. Often they themselves lack reference points to cling to in the midst of these changes. One way in which the teacher can respond to this lack of bearings is to allow the student to work with a partner or in a small group of two or three people. This kind of combined effort gives erratic students some outside sources of reference and some stability as their efforts are combined with others' toward a final product. It is a comforting and reassuring feeling to have someone else ask, "What's going on in here?" on those days when nothing is working well. The student has a more secure place to be for a while and has the benefit of learning by the example of others.

6. An adolescent is a person trying to learn independence, trying to pull away from family and adult control. This kind of student does not want to hear teacher explanations about why poetry is important or what it should mean to the student. One approach that can be used (especially at the beginning of a poetry unit) is to have the student decide and define for him/herself what poetry is on a personal level. I have asked students to complete a handout with open-ended responses such as the following: To me, poetry has always. . . ; One major requirement of poetry is. . . ; Poetry makes me feel. . . ; Poetry is different from prose because. . . ; The thing I like most about poetry is. . . ; My favorite poem is. . . ; and The first thing I notice about a poem is. . . . I then ask students to compare answers in small groups of three or four and to report their consensus answers to the whole group. The key is to accept all answers offered and to acknowledge them as valid, especially such answers as "To me, poetry has always been boring and confusing." When the students see their answers are given credibility, they will offer less resistance and will begin to explore these questions in the light of what they are now reading.

7. Adolescents are often people who have not yet found a major place to be successful in their lives. They feel insecure and threatened and are looking for ways to prove (to themselves and to others) that they are competent. The classroom teacher can capitalize on this need and can offer a guaranteed place of success to all the students. Writings that the students have done or poetry they have written can be reviewed in peer editing groups and bound together in "published" collections for the whole class or the school. The students can become an editorial staff and learn the process of editing and revising, arranging the works into a completed whole. All efforts are accepted as worthy, and revisions are encouraged of those in need, but the whole class is included in both the contributing and the editing processes.

8. To these students, school work is often secondary to their social life as they are trying out new relationships and trying themselves out in interactions with others. Recognizing this, the teacher can set up situations that look like social interactions more than learning and can lead the students into the educational process painlessly. One such method is the group writing of a poem. Everyone is asked to form a large circle. In turn, each writes a line of a poem according to directions from the teacher, folds the paper to cover the line, and passes it to the next person. Suggested form:
    1. The adjective noun
    2. verb adverb
    3. while the adjective noun
    4. verb
    5. preposition of placement the adjective noun.

    With the form prescribed and the directions specific, students do not have to feel embarrassed about writing poetry, and with no one taking the responsibility for completing an entire poem alone, the students can relax and enjoy the results, which are usually hilarious. The situation becomes very relaxed and informal, and the students are surprised to discover they have really become poets. (This also works well with parts of speech.) From here they are more receptive to writing poems entirely on their own.

Our paragon of a classroom teacher can survive, then, if she is aware of her student population, of their unique characteristics, of their particular needs and interests. Not many of us feel ourselves to be perfect teachers, but awareness and sensitivity can go a long way in the classroom and can give us more moments of perfection. The relationship is one built on respect, and the teacher who learns this lesson early will have much greater success.

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THE USES OF STUDENT JOURNALS

Ken Autrey

I began requiring my freshman composition students to keep journals in order to help them write regularly, learn to clarify or develop thoughts by writing, and establish an idea bank for essays. Above all, I wanted the journal to be "the birthplace of an authentic voice," as Donald Stewart expresses it.[1] Now, four years and some 10,000 journal pages later, I still believe in those justifications, but I now find that journals serve an additional purpose: they are an important means of communication between my students and me.

While I once saw myself as a mere eavesdropper in my weekly scanning of the required three pages per student, I now see the journal as an opportunity for students to communicate with me with an intimacy even our individual conferences do not offer. Although I still think of the journal as a personal record, I now realize that no student writes in it without an awareness of me as an audience of one—accepting and uncritical, but an audience nevertheless.

Student comments reveal this awareness. One young woman asked me to read her journal entries carefully enough so that we could routinely discuss them in her conferences. Several students have regularly closed their weekly three-page installments with questions for me: "What do you think about this case?" or "What would you do about this problem?" Various student writers have chided me for skimming too quickly over their journals and overlooking a question addressed to me or an announcement of an upcoming birthday.

Perhaps this consciousness of audience helps give the journals more vitality than painstakingly produced essays. Hans Guth has said that good writing is defined as something the writer wants to write and the reader wants to read.[2] The journals sometimes fit this ideal better than student papers after two or three drafts. Because they so often capture my interest, I do not mind spending the relatively short time needed to read the journals.

Although my students have not always liked the journals, more often than I would have guessed final course critiques show an attachment to this ungraded weekly encounter with me. A few have commented on how surprised they were to learn than they could like regular self-directed writing. Near the end of one semester, one young man poured out the frustration he felt in nearing exams with extensive coursework yet to be done, and then, appreciating the journal for the outlet it provided, he wrote, "Thank God for this journal."

Of course few students embrace the journal with such fervor. Many are guilty of writing merely to satisfy the quota of pages for the week. Three pages a week seems a modest amount and should allow for some careful writing. Actually this has seldom happened. Most students write hurriedly, and some seem always to be scribbling their last few sentences just before class. One last minute writer wrote, "I came to class

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early to spend a few minutes reviewing my life." And his hurried last minute work audaciously attempted to do just that.

Despite the carelessness sometimes evoked by this weekly pound of flesh, the journals frequently embody a voice and authority that student essays often lack. I think, for example, of one student whose papers were usually stilted and lifeless, quite unlike her humorous and unconventional classroom personality. I kept looking in her prose for a breakthrough to this personality but didn't find it until after she had the misfortune of injuring her knee and spending a week in the hospital. When she returned to classes she submitted a journal entry which was far more vibrant and interesting than any paper she had written up to then. It began, "When I was in the hospital I got so bored I had to get out one way or another." Then came a detailed and riotous account of how, several days after her knee operation, she had secretly escaped on crutches to experience freedom for a precarious hour before returing to her hospital bed.

Another young woman whose writing was competent but impersonal and uninspired found her own voice in a journal account of her role in a beauty pageant. She wrote about the makeup that ran in the heat, the long uncomfortable wait in tight shoes, the nervousness that caused her knees literally to knock together. This narrative contained far more detail and emotion than anything she had written before.

Of course there are good reasons for these successes. Students who know their work will not be evaluated will naturally take more risks. Also, given freedom of choice, it is not surprising that students sometimes come up with entertaining pieces; they are on familiar ground, something an assigned topic does not always allow. And the journals foster a spontaneity, an idea flow of the same sort that makes freewriting a useful invention technique.

This spontaneity yields student perceptions I would not otherwise know about. Only through journals have I come to understand the fraternity and sorority system on campus, for example. Only the journals reveal what really happens on the weekends, in the dorms, or at the cafeteria tables. Thus, these student jottings help me maintain my own increasingly tenuous link with my college experiences. The journals bring back to me the anguish of the lost weekend, the exhaustion of early moring study, and the ambivalence felt in living away from home for the first time.

Aside from reminding me of these collective experiences, the journals are valuable for what they reveal about individuals. One student became more than a face at the back of the class when I read in her journal, "God has blessed my mother to keep on living with cancer." After reading the ensuing account of her attitude toward her mother's terminal illness, my esteem for her was heightened. Such revelations help me to see my students as people as well as writers—or as writers with substantial experiences to relate.

What use do I make of the intimacies that come through the pages of the journals? Usually I internalize them and, in accord with the conventional wisdom, do not comment on them. However, I do not take that conventional wisdom as absolute. That is, when it seems appropriate, I mention items from the journals in conferences. I believe that this is one way of showing students that their messages come through, that their journals, as Ken Macrorie might put it, are "to be read." Also, a general awareness of student concerns helps me to frame meaningful assignments and relate to students with some awareness of what is on their minds.

Attempting to classify these concerns as they come out spontaneously, I recently surveyed twenty student journals from my freshman writing classes. during the course, I had asked each student to write three pages a week in a spiralbound notebook which was turned in each Monday for thirteen weeks. I gave full credit for a complete three pages. Eleven students submitted all thirteen entries, six had ten to twelve, and three turned in fewer than ten. Most wrote the full week's quota in one sitting, a practice I did not discourage.

Throughout the semester, students covered an average of two topics per week. Some entries were almost stream-of-consciousness, sifting through ideas and observations almost randomly, while others developed a single topic methodically. I provided no suggestions for specific topics. Below are the topics appearing most frequently. Of course, these may be peculiar to the students I teach at Tougaloo College.

THE MOST COMMON JOURNAL TOPIC

		# of students out of 20 using the topic at least once in 13 weeks.	Total # of times topic appeared
1.	College classes	11	25
2.	Parents or other relatives	11	25
3.	Weekend activities	7	23
4.	The process of writing in the journal	5	23
5.	Friend or roommate	11	20
6.	Athletic or social event off campus	10	19
7.	Personal narrative from the past	8	18
8.	Social or extracurricular event on campus	8	18
9.	Vacations (Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.)	10	17
10.	Travel home	8	17
11.	Religious activities	7	17
12.	Grades, exams, or academic work	10	16
13.	Miscellaneous college fears and frustrations	10	15
14.	Current news events	8	15

Most of the topics show a preoccupation with the here and now. although students narrated incidents from the past eighteen times, the vast majority of the entries concern the present. Only two entries referred to the summer before college. Not surprisingly, given the usual pressures of the first semester at college, many students wrote about weekends at home and on vacation.

There are striking omissions. Although fifteen topics addressed various college fears and frustrations, only one student mentioned inferior cafeteria food—a perennial complaint on our campus and I assume on many others. There were only ten references to television in the twenty journals; this surprised me in view of the hours students spend watching T.V.

Surprisingly, few students used the journal simply as a diary, even though I had suggested that possibility. One student did use his journal as a way of recounting his week's activities in detail and apparently did so in one sitting. Another habitually reported on his weekend activities, although his accounts usually contained more flavor than a mere objective run-down. The other eighteen students tended to write about wihat interested them at the moment, with most using narrative or expository modes as a rule.

Some students, while not using a diary approach, did tend to cover the same topics or use the same patterns week after week. One student, for example, almost without fail began her three pages with a comment about how difficult it was to find something to write about. In her journal writing and that of a few others I saw no discernible change in the ability to focus on a topic over the thirteen-week period.

On the other hand, some seemed consciously to challenge themselves or set new topics for themselves each time. The journals seemed most useful to these students. On occasion these student journal topics have given me ideas for class assignments. One student's topics were expecially provocative. He grappled with such questions as "Does Hell Exist?" and "What is Home to Me?" and "What Made Things Come Into Being?" Often, a student's means of narrowing a topic proved superior to anything I might have thought of, as some of the opening sentences show: "There was a time when T.V. would hypnotize me;" "Writing is forming an opinion;" "Getting ready to take a test is a pain for most students."

1. I will consult the above list of common journal topics in setting essay assignments early in the semester. Later I will urge students to tackle subjects they are apparently less comfortable with.

2. I will remember that some students seem to enjoy and benefit from the journal more than others. For those whose writing therein is slipshod or repetitious, I will suggest (though not require) more specific topics and techniques. Also, I will be less hesitant about discussing the usefulness of the journal with students in conferences. For those who see the three-pages-per-week requirement as an albatross, we will explore optional assignments after giving the journal a chance.

3. I will provide more sample exercises from published journals, discussing with students various uses writers make of them.[3]

4. Occasionally, I will read selections from my journal in class.

5. I will actively encourage students to read back through their writing, to look for changing attitudes or to find consistent stylistic features. I will lead students to benefit not only from writing in their journals but also from rereading them.

6. Finally, I will abandon my initial assumption that journals are private when made a course requirement. They are certainly more private and

spontaneous than essays that are published (made public) and evaluated. But I will delude neither my students nor myself into thinking they are expected to ignore the fact that I will read the journals weekly. I am an external audience, occasionally a responsive one, and I do my students a disservice when I pretend otherwise. I have learned much about my students through their journals, and I want them to realize that journals can not only help them know themselves better but also can help me know them better and thus become a more effective teacher.

NOTES

[1] The Authentic Voice: A Prewriting Approach to College Writing (Dubuque, IO: William C. Brown, 1972), p. 47.

[2] Unpublished comments, CCC Convention (Dallas, TX, March 1981).

[3] For a list of published journals see Fred D. White, "Published Journals as Samples for Students of Composition," The Writing Instructor, 1 (Summer 1982), 155-156.

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WRITING THROUGH TRUST

Marty Brewster

In all classes the effort by the student and the quality of learning are directly proportional to the amount of trust placed by the student in the instructor and in class peers. While such trust is sought in all classes, it is essential in the writing class if the student is to reveal self in prose and poetry and if the student is to honestly evaluate the writing of others.

Even though teachers may subconsciously facilitate an atmosphere of trust and confidence in all courses, it is in the writing class that such maneuvers must be planned and esecuted with utmost skill. The success or failure of the class hinges upon it. To establish trust between student and teacher is not enough, for junior high and high school students place great importance upon conformity. One insidious comment by a peer can prevent a gifted student from producing anything else of worth.

At the beginning of the school year, several tactics may be employed to establish rapport within the class, With junior high students, as indeed with all students, evaluations and their format should be explicitly explained. If the following evaluation standards are detailed by the teacher, the likelihood of student misconceptions is minimized.

The first thing to stress is that no student is required to share all writing with the class as a unit. At this point, students should be shown the difference between public and private writing. While the standard writing class concentrates on public writing for a specific audience, the students should be told that private writings, such as diaries, are cathartic and should be explored at some time in the year. For such writings that are meant to be private, the student should write "Private" at the head of the first page. These works will then be read by the teacher only. When students are informed at the beginning of the year that writings will be periodically shared with the entire class, it becomes a matter of course and not a singling out. As a courtesy, however, the teacher should verify that a certain paper is O.K. for sharing before presenting it to the class. Often the harried student will forget to add "Private" before turning in the paper.

When the teacher begins the process of whole-class evaluation, the first presenter should be the teacher. If the teacher is game enough to bring in a piece for criticism by the class, students recognize that "it can't be so bad." Before the first paper has been read, it's the teacher's job to indicate that criticism in the literary sense indicates evaluation, or analysis of both good and bad qualities. In fact, for many students the term "criticism" should be abolished and "evaluation" substituted.

Prior to reading a personal literary work, the teacher should provide the students with an evaluation sheet to stimulate comments and provide the students with an evaluative base. Such a guide would include:

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1. What images did you like?
2. Did you feel the way you believe the author intended you to feel?
3. How did the author convey the emotion to you effectively?
4. What one sentence really caught your eye?
5. What adjectives and adverbs were really good?
6. How did specific examples help you to understand/appreciate the piece?
7. How did dialogue help the piece?

After the positive aspects of the piece have been discussed, the negative aspects can be approached using the following questions as guides:

1. What would you like to see written in more detail?
2. Is there any part you felt was unclear? How could it be rewritten?
3. What overall suggestion would you make for improvement?

By gearing the evaluation toward specific improvements, the student evaluators must project themselves into the literary work. This discourages students from saying simply, "It stinks," and produces greater insight into self-evaluation of writing as well. For the author receiving the evaluation, specific suggestions gear thought toward rewriting instead of the usual turn-in-a-paper-get-a-grade-and-forget-it routine.

After the teacher has been in the catbird's seat and has accepted all comments graciously and with the attitude that the students are editors, the teacher may want to revise the paper according to suggestions. If the suggestions are not sound, the teacher should state why they are not sound for that particular piece of writing, not that the comments are in general stupid. Students are wary at this point and need confidence in order to make suggestions as well as to receive them.

Of course, some students seem to have too much confidence. The student who turns in a paper liberally coated with violence, blue language, or torrid love scenes is much like a three year old who has to drop a crystal vase "just to see what might happen." When the first off-color paper is submitted, try to ignore the parts that do not fulfill the assignment. Instead correct grammar and mechanical flaws. At the paper's conclusion, simply write "I do not consider this literature". Then let it go. For the majority of students, this will be enough. Having tried and failed to produce a violent reaction from the teacher, the student will settle down. For the student who persists in writing about unacceptable topics or who consistently uses gutter language, a private conference should be scheduled. At the conference the teacher must inform the student that passing the class depends upon conforming to certain social standards as well as adherence to class norms. Through the conference the teacher can attempt to learn the source of the problem for which the writing is only a symptom.

For introverted students the idea of full-class evaluation is too threatening and may best be solved by dyadic evaluation. Students should be paired by the teacher. Student determination is not advised for two reasons: unpopular students tend to be overlooked, and friends are likely to intensify each other's positive aspects while ignoring weak areas. To reduce communication stress, students should make written notes as they read the paper. Then students hand both the paper and the notes to the author for review. Only after both have been read by the respective authors should actual conversation take place concerning the papers.

Until now the effects of trust upon actual writing have been discussed. Just as important, however, are the attitudes formed in such an environment toward the class as a unit. As they develop trust in their peers concerning writing, students develop more social trust in the members of the class. If another student is honest in writing, the student is more likely to behave honestly with those peers at the Pizza Hut or in the bleachers.

The unity of such classes can be demonstrated by the comments, "Does the 1:10 class write as well as we do?" (Note that the question is "as well" not "as much") and "Could we use your room during our study hall to tutor Mickey and Tammy? They're having some trouble with their short stories." In this case, Mickey and Tammy were not socially close to the speakers, but the quicker students were eager to improve the quality of the class.

These techniques may be considered unique for two reasons. First, they elevate the student from knowledge and understanding to aesthetic needs satisfaction. Unfortunately, the majority of teachers continue to teach writing in the same ways that prepositional phrases and predicate nomnatives are memorized. When students are provided the opportunity to write, they are given one topic upon which to write with accompanying prerequisites, such as "100 to 200 words, introduction, body, and conclusion, use story on p. 354 as basis and discuss the good and bad character traits of Sally." An assignment such as this (usually with more rigid rules) places writing on the same basis as "Answer Exercise 3 by writing the simple subjects of sentences 1-30". And some teachers wonder why students hate writing.

When students are treated as writers, each with a distinctive style and a unique message to convey, writing becomes a medium for self-analysis and communication with others. Rather than groaning, "I can't get enough words," the student asks, "Will you object if I write this in chapters and only give you 800 words in the first one?" Students can be heard in the halls talking about the personification in Craig's paper; outside and inside the class, kids read each other's stories with more interest than dirty jokes; and the dismissal bell is heard with dismay, if not ignored until an evaluation session has been completed.

Rather than fulfilling the assignment, students write for themselves and other students. This not only teaches them the value of audience but makes the writing infinitely more interesting to read.

The second benefit of such a system is the unity it produces in the class. Interdependence is a way of life. Not only do students perfect interaction skills, but writing becomes the transactive process it is meant to be. Because the class is not teacher-structured, students strive to communicate with their peers in a productive manner rather than to please the teacher. Because the students assist in self-evaluation as well as peer evaluation, the atmosphere is one of cooperative not competitive learning.

In summation, students learn more effectively when high levels of trust can be established in the classroom. Nowhere is it more important than in the writing class. To increase such trust, self-respect and respect for the writing for others must be the norm.

FOCUSING AND DETAILING: A DESCRIPTIVE SOLUTION

Robert L. Wilson

Understanding that abstracting with language takes place on different levels is often a difficult concept for writers to understand. Although an understanding of the principle is involved in all writing, it is especially important to understand the concept in descriptive writing because a descriptor is needed for focusing, and several of them are needed to support.

One of the first notions I try to instill in my students is that writing is a process of contracting and expanding. The higher up the ladder of language one travels, the more encompassing the terms. Level II descriptors are invariably more encompassing than Level I descriptors. (See tables below.)

Level II Descriptors

NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
offensive	mysterious	pleasant
disgusting	curious	refreshing
revolting	enigmatic	delightful
irritating	puzzling	captivating
repugnant	perplexing	inviting

Level I Descriptors

SIGHT	SMELL	SOUND	TASTE	TOUCH
arthritic	pungent	blatant	putrid	abrasive
peduncled	biting	raucous	bland	silky
brittle	penetrating	vibrating	scrumptious	porous
serrate	rancid	restful	revitalizing	sponge-like
cadaverous	fragrant	soothing	curdling	metallic
arid	regurgitant	dischordant	acetic	filmy
parchment-like	burnt	melodious	palatable	icy
crisp	odorless	harmonic	delectable	corrosive
delicate	nauseating	mesmerizing	unappetizing	syrupy
venous	noxious	disconcerting	sickening-sweet	granulated
symmetrical	piquant	thumping	puckering	pliant
oblong	fetid	intrusive	addictive	clabbered
immobile	over-ripe	pulsating	natural	cushioned
rustic	maladorous	crackling	tangy	scaly
dichotomous	flatulent	fractious	mouth-watering	tepid

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Students need to see the subtle differences between focusing a descriptive paragraph with the sentence The leaf hanging from the tree is dry and the topic sentence The lone leaf dangling from the tree is indeed mysterious. The first example is clearly too narrowly focused. After all, what examples there are of dryness are obviously limited. Looking at the visual descriptors at Level I in the list above, one can readily observe that none of the words (even though the inventory is limited) is suited to exemplify the focus in the topic sentence. Some of the words are symptomatic of dryness; others are the result of dryness. In the second example, however, with the word mysterious carrying the focus, the possibilities for support are virtually unlimited. From that same list of descriptors at Level I, one could readily illustrate the term of focus. Separately or collectively, the cadaverous appearance, the arthritic form, the parchment-like color, and the serrate edges all bespeak the mysteriousness of the object being described. In other words, Level II descriptors allow for a greater selection of specifics to support them than do Level I descriptors.

There is as great a danger in students focusing too narrowly as there is in their focusing too broadly. For that reason, it is imperative that teachers of writing spend ample time on the concept of focus. If, in fact, the nature of supports is to illustrate the focus contained in the topic sentence, there needs to be a broad enough descriptor to focus on. Typically, narrative and expository patterns do not require this awareness to the extent that descriptive paragraphs do.

I try to emphasize to students that human perceptions vary, and that variance is often in part a product of the perceptions they bring to the writing. Even though an entire class may be attempting to describe a common object, some will respond to it positively, others negatively, and others neutrally. Consequently, the term of focus will reflect either neutrality or some feeling in one direction or the other from it. Three students in the same setting could perceive the leaf mentioned earlier as inviting or revolting or, in other instances, simply curious. Whichever their choice, that term of focus will determine the Level I descriptors in the supports that follow. The leaf may be inviting because of its symmetry. It may be revolting because of its peduncled appearance. Or it may be curious because of its parchment-like surface. At any rate, the perception contained in the focus will allow/disallow specific descriptors in the images that follow.

The same is true of olfactory perceptions. The overall perception will be positive, negative, or neutral. The positive will allow fragrant; the negative will alow fetid; and the neutral will allow penetrating. In rare instances will each allow the other.

As auditory perceptions go, the same principle applies, as it does for gustatory and tactile impressions. The important thing to remember is that Level I and Level II descriptors must be compatible with each other in a given description. The images need to complement one another for the paragraph to have that consistency of tone, which is essential to good writing.

The nature of Level II descriptors is to encompass a multitude of detail that will give credence to the focus in the topic sentence. The topic sentence needs to provide an opportunity for writers to amply illustrate with specifics in the supports that follow. And it is only a broad descriptor that will allow them to do so.

THE CINQUAIN:
A PATHWAY TO IMPROVED PARAGRAPHS OF CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Jo Anne Raiford Bryant

The process of writing is rarely a painless, effortless act. For even the most experienced writer it often requires much concentration and effort. Plato in the 4th century B. C. recognized the importance of what he termed the "proper view" and revealed what is perhaps the focal point of all speaking and writing. ". . . we ought to turn all explanations inside out, and see if there appears some other, perchance easier and shorter, way . . . so as not to wander in vain on a long and rugged road when we have a short and smooth one."[1] This suggestion involves a thought process, a mental activity. While we do not yet understand how people learn to think or reason, we do know that generating ideas and transposing them into language is an inseparable element of composition.

Effective writing hinges upon the realization that a key idea must be logically developed; only those facts which are related should be considered. Because of a keen awareness of the complexity of the composing process, teachers of composition continually examine and reexamine various techniques and methodologies in an effort to better guide and instruct their students. Most teachers readily acknowledge that one of the most difficult aspects of this process is that of invention or discovery, the systematic search for an argument, a subject. Sondra Perl and Arthur Egendorf have detailed a process of creative discovery and traced its origin to the Socratic method of inquiry; they recognize that ". . . this discovery process unfolds by virtue of the writer's own activity."[2] This belief has also been expounded by Stephen Judy in his suggestion that ". . . teachers must find the structure for a class not in the discipline and subject matter of English, but in the child himself, who as a curious, growing human being uses language to express his needs, opinions, reactions, and responses."[3]

It is our task as classroom teachers to provide students with topics to which they can relate and to guide them in learning a procedure—a mental process—that will facilitate individual composing processes. Rarely is composition isolated from other genres. Often on the secondary level, students write in response to a literary work. Such assignments are frequently made in an effort to eliminate much of the invention stage for the student; the failure to achieve this goal is apparent when the students' papers are examined. Teachers lament the shortcomings of the compositions and continue to search for improved instructional methods or more sharply defined topics. The solution may be found, however, in yet another realm—that elusive region of thought. As Donald Murray observes, "Teaching a student to write is, in the final analysis, the same thing as teaching him to think."[4]

While this concept is not new, it is clearly evident that there is no one method that will insure its success. Evidence of this is found in the vast number of journal articles which regularly present tried and true methods of teaching certain aspects of composition. Many neglect, however, to acknowledge the importance of the students'

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developing thought processes which will guide their writings. We sometimes fail our students when we omit or superficially treat essential steps in this mental process. Just as a building requires a firm foundation, students require a stable base of ideas upon which they can build their compositions. Consider the often assigned paragraph or theme based on character analysis. We may erroneously assume that most secondary students can read, analyze, and then synthesize those sections which focus on a character's actions, motives, and personality traits. Often this assumption results in frustration for the students and anguish for the teacher. This composition assignment can be facilitated by using short story selections for the initial assignments and by using a variation of the Socratic method to aid the students as they learn to think for themselves.

The cinquain, a type of patterned poetry, can be successfully used to help students categorize and analyze a character's most basic attributes and actions. This five line poem consists of one noun on the first line, two adjectives describing this noun on the second line, three verbs telling what the noun does on the third line, a thought or phrase about the noun on the fourth line, and one noun on the fifth line. Because students must succinctly describe a character and his actions, they are forced to examine, categorize, and make decisions which will better prepare them for the composition assignment. In order to help them develop the thought processes needed, the teacher should first present the students with the following three column table and work with them as it is completed.

nouns	adjectives	verbs

The character's name is placed in the noun column. The students are then asked to list nouns that apply to this character, adjectives that describe him, and verbs that depict his actions. At this stage I encourage students to work together to compile their lists; this procedure is similar to a stage of Linda Flower's and John Hayes's strategy for problem-solving which identifies "rich bits" and then "nutshells" the ideas which are explained to a listener.[5] As students evaluate the words on their lists, they frequently delete or modify words which are challenged. A master list is then compiled on the board or overhead projector. If a word is challenged, the class must discuss its merit and decide either to omit or include it using the short story selection as a rationale. Once this master list has been completed, students are given the task of writing an original cinquain using their tables as a reference. These are shared and subtle differences in word choice, verb sequences, and thoughts are considered. Even the more basic students readily master this pattern and become involved with the character who is being analyzed.

Relatively little of the work thus far has involved actual composition. The emphasis has been upon teaching a systematic approach for deciphering the character's physical and psychological components from the context of the story. "Content precedes form, and writing is not words and sentences, but ideas which are honed into thoughts."[6] After composing the cinquains, students are ready to approach the more complex task—that of writing a paragraph analysis on some aspect of the character. It might be centered around his personality, motives, or character traits; the specific assignment should be tailored to fit the story and the students' abilities. Because they have scrutinized the character and his function in the story in order to formulate the detailed lists, to compose the cinquain, and to participate in the thought-provoking discussions and word challenges, however, they are well prepared for this assignment. While stylistic elements will probably need revision, students who have completed this assignment rarely stray off the topic or have difficulty with their writings. Indeed, the comments made when these paragraphs are shared often center around the choice of supporting evidence from the story and the decisions that determined which references would be included. The earlier activities compelled students to examine, sort, analyze, and synthesize various aspects of the character and to substantiate their thoughts, using the story itself as a basis.

The enthusiasm with which students often approach this assignment reflects their past efforts. They are comfortable with the character; he or she has become more like an actual person. The time spent teaching them to examine, to think, has been well invested. With practice, the procedure becomes internalized, and the students rely less and less on the teacher's probing questions for guidance and the lists and cinquains for initial organization. They have been taught a method of thought, a way to achieve insight. While this initially involves time and effort, the benefits which result both in improved attitudes and compositions are substantial. Plato's goal has been achieved. These students are not wandering on long, rugged roads; they have a map, a plan, to guide them along a short, smooth way.

Notes

[1] Plato, Phaedrus, Ion, Gorgian, and Symposium, with passages from the Republic and Laws, translated by Lane Cooper (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 47.

[2] Sondra Perl and Arthur Egendorf, "The Process of Creative Discovery: Theory, Research, and Implications for Teaching," Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition, ed. Donald McQuade, p. 124.

[3] Stephen Judy, "The Search for Structures in the Teaching of Composition," English Journal, February 1970, (59:2), p. 214.

[4] Donald Murray, A Writer Teaches Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), p. 215.

[5] Linda S. Flower and John R. Hayes, "Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process," College English, December 1977, (39:4), 455-457.

[6] Murray, p. 17.

ANTON CHEKHOV ON WRITING

Ross Beatty

From the multitude of writing manuals used in English composition and creative writing courses, one could well conclude that the principles of good writing were discovered but recently—perhaps by the authors of the Macmillan or Prentice-Hall handbooks. Not so: these principles have been known for a long time. Even without knowing the Macmillan Handbook's rules #27-2-i and 27-2-ii, Shakespeare was able to determine that "quick forge and working house of thought" Henry V, (Chorus, Act IV) was an effective way to express "imagination." And Anton Chekhov didn't need to read John Braine's Writing a Novel to help him create his characters: there is nothing new under the sun.

Nearly a century ago Chekhov discussed many of the principles of writing good fiction that are taught today. I have culled these remarks from Chekhov's letters and from his play The Seagull, and include them below. After each quote I shall briefly indicate the source in parentheses; I shall give the complete reference at the end of the article, under "Bibliography."

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKS OF ART

Definite aim for an artist and a work of art

> He thinks in images, his stories are striking, vivid, and they move me deeply. It's just regrettable that he doesn't have a definite aim. He makes an impression, and that's all, but the impression doesn't lead you very far.
>
> —Dr. Dorn, speaking about Konstantin, Act IV, The Seagull (Young, 62)

> In a work of art there must be a clear, definite idea. You must know why you are writing. Otherwise, if you go along on that picturesque road without a definite aim, you will lose your way and your talent will ruin you.
>
> —Dorn, Act I, The Seagull (Young, 20)

Great idea in a work of art

> A work of art must express a great idea. There is no beauty without seriousness. . . . Depict only what is important and eternal.
>
> —Dorn, Act I, The Seagull (Young, 20)

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Importance of form

> I'm coming to the conclusion that it's a matter not of old forms and not of new forms, but of one's writing without giving any thought to what form to choose, writing because it comes pouring from one's soul.
>
> —Trepliov, Act IV, The Seagull (Young, 64)

II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A WRITER

Beginning a work of art with questions and intent

> Anyone who says the artist's field is all answers and no questions has never done any writing or had any dealings with imagery. The artist observes, selects, guesses and synthesizes. The very fact of these actions presupposes a question; if he hadn't asked himself a question at the start, he would have had nothing to guess and nothing to select. To put it briefly: if you deny that creativity involves questions and intent, you have to claim that the artist creates without premeditation or purpose, in a state of unthinking emotionality. And so if any author were to boast to me that he'd written a story from pure inspiration, without first having thought over his intentions, I'd call him a madman.
>
> —letter to Suvorin, 10/27/88 (Heim, 117)

Answering specific questions in a piece of fiction

> It is not the artist's job to try to answer narrow, specialized questions. . . . We have specialists for dealing with special questions; it is their job to make judgments about the peasant communes, the fate of capitalism, the evils of intemperance, and about boots[1] and female complaints. The artist must pass judgment only on what he understands; his range is as limited as that of any other specialist.
>
> —letter to Suvorin, 10/27/88 (Heim, 116)

Formulating questions versus answering them in a piece of fiction

> You are right to demand that an author take conscious stock of what he is doing, but you are confusing two concepts: answering the questions and formulating them correctly. Only the latter is required of an author. There's not a single question answered in Anna Karenina or Eugene Onegin, but they are still fully satisfying works because the questions they raise are all formulated correctly. It is the duty of the court to formulate the questions correctly, but it is up to each member of the jury to answer them according to his own preference.
>
> —letter to Suvorin, 10/27/88 (Heim, 117)

Solving philosophical questions suggested by a writer's characters

> It is not the writer's job to solve such problems as God, pessimism, etc.; his job is merely to record who, under what conditions, said or thought what about God or pessimism. The artist

> is not meant to be a judge of his characters and what they say; his only job is to be an impartial witness. . . . Drawing conclusions is up to the jury, . . . the readers.[2]
>
> —letter to Suvorin, 5/30/88 (Heim, 104)

Need for writers to have goals and to express these goals in their writing

> You're used to strong stuff, and I've offered you some sweet lemonade. Then, though you give the lemonade its due, you cogently note that it contains no alcohol. But that's precisely what we /Russian writers in the 1880's and 1890's/ lack: the alcohol capable of intoxicating and enslaving. . . . Putting . . . myself aside, . . . who among my contemporaries has given the world a single drop of alcohol? Aren't all of today's playwrights lemonade? They're nice, they're talented, you're delighted by them, but at the same time you can't forget your desire for a smoke. Science and technology are now going through a period of greatness, but for us this is a precarious, sour, dreary period, and we ourselves are sour and dreary. The causes do not lie in our stupidity, our insolence or our lack of talent, but in a malady that for an artist is worse than syphilis or sexual impotence.
>
> We truly lack a certain something: if you lift up the skirts of our muse, all you see is a flat area. Keep in mind that the writers we call eternal or simply good, the writers who intoxicate us, have one highly important trait in common: they're moving toward something definite and beckon you to follow, and that you feel with your entire being, not only with your mind, that they have a certain goal. . . . Depending on their caliber, some have immediate goals—the abolition of serfdom, the liberation of one's country, politics, beauty, or simply vodka—while the goals of others are more remote—God, life after death, the happiness of mankind, etc. The best of them are realistic and describe life as it is, but because each line is saturated with the consciousness of its goal, you feel life as it should be in addition to life as it is, and you are captivated by it.
>
> But what about us? Us. We describe life as it is and stop dead right there. We wouldn't lift a hoof if you lit into us with a whip. We have neither immediate nor remote goals, and there is an emptiness in our souls. We have no politics, we don't believe in revolution, there is no God, we're not afraid of ghosts, and I personally am not even afraid of death or blindness. No one who wants nothing, hopes for nothing and fears nothing can be an artist.
>
> /Nevertheless,/ I can only assume that my malady has goals that are good, yet hidden from us, and that there is a motive behind its being sent. . . . There is a method to this madness.
>
> —letter to Suvorin, 11/25/92 (Heim, 242-244)

Humanity of a writer

> The author must remain humane to the very end.
>
> —letter to Elena Shavrova, 2/28/95 (Heim, 269)

Writer's block

The Lord has bestowed a kind, gentle heart upon you; use it, then—write with a tender pen, with a soul at ease, without giving thought to the offense that you have suffered.[3] You have bogged down knee-deep in trifles, are tired out by trifles, are oversensitive, have no faith in yourself—hence your constant thoughts of ailments, of need, of thoughts of a pension, of Weinberg. . . . Regard yourself, regard your gift, justly; let your galleon sail the wide-spreading sea—don't keep it docked at Fontanka.[4] forgive all those who have wronged you, become resigned, and . . . buckle down to writing.

—letter to Leontyev-Shchlegov, 2/2/00 (Heim, 377)

III. SPECIFIC ADVICE ON HOW TO WRITE FICTION

Particulars in descriptions of nature and characters

In descriptions of nature one ought to seize upon the little particulars, grouping them in such a way that, when you shut your eyes while you read, you get a picture. For instance, you will get the full effect of a moonlight night if you write that on the mill dam a little glowing starpoint flashed from the neck of a broken bottle, and the round, black shadow of a dog, or wolf, emerged and ran.

—letter to Alexander Chekhov, his brother, 5/10/86(Friedland; 70, 71)

To emphasize the poverty of a beggar woman, it is not necessary to speak of her miserable appearance; it is enough to remark in passing that she wore an old, rust-colored cloak. . . . A single detail is enough. (quoted in Valency, p. 61)

Details to depict state of mind

As far as psychology goes, details are also the thing. . . . Best of all is to avoid depicting the hero's state of mind; you ought to try to make it clear from the hero's actions.[5]

—letter to Alexander Chekhov, 5/10/86 (Yarmolinsky, 37)

Number of characters in a short story

It is not necessary to portray many characters. The center of gravity should be in two persons: him and her.

—letter to Alexander Chekhov, 5/10/86 (Yarmolinsky, 37)

From your mass of heroes and semi-heroes you choose one individual, a wife of a husband; place him against the background, and portray only that person and emphasize only him. The others you scatter in the background like so much small change. The result is something like the firmament: one large moon surrounded by a mass of tiny stars.

—letter to Suvorin, 10/27/88 (Heim, 118)

Objectivity about characters

When you depict poor, unlucky people, and want to touch the reader's heart, try to remain cold—this will provide a kind of background, against which the sorrow stands out in greater relief. . . . The more sensitive the matter, the more calmly one should describe it—and the more touching it will finally be.

—letters to L. A. Avilov, 3/19/92 and 3/1/93 (Friedland; 97, 98)

Writing from experience

Do not invent sufferings that you never experienced, and do not paint pictures you never saw, for a lie is even more annoying in a story than in a conversation.

—letter to Alexander Chekhov, 4/6/86 (Friedland, 70)

Offensive language

You are lyrical by nature, the timbre of your soul is gentle. If you had been a composer, you'd have avoided writing marches. Deliberately offensive language, loudness, causticity, and frenzied denunciations are not characteristic of your talent. Therefore you should understand why I advise you not to spare, as you proofread, the sons-of-bitches and other assorted curs and mutts that keep reappearing here and there in the pages of your /story/.

—letter to Gorky, 9/3/99 (Heim, 362)

Musicality

. . . you have to work over the musical quality, and not permit, side by side in a single phrase, *stala* and *perestala*.

—letter to L. A. Avilov, 11/3/97 (Yarmolinsky, 295)

Sensory reactions in reader as the effect of good writing

I have given such an account of the climate /of Sakhalin Island/that you will feel cold when you read about it.

—letter to Suvorin, 5/18/91 (Friedman, 309)

Women must be described in such a way that the reader feels that your / the author to whom Chekhov is writing / jacket is unbuttoned and your tie is off. (quoted in Jackson, p. 45)

Endings

My instinct tells me that at the end of a novel or short story I must artfully concentrate for the reader an impression of the entire work, and therefore must casually mention something about those whom I have already presented.

—letter to Pleshcheyev, 9/30/89 (Yarmolinsky, 166)

IV. CONCISION

It is better to say not enough than to say too much, because . . . because—I don't know why, it just is.
letter to Leontyev-Shchlegov, 1/22/88 (Friedland, 106)

When one expends the least amount of motion on a definite action, that is grace.
—letter to Gorky, 1/3/99 (Heim, 338)

Your works lack the compactness that make short things alive.
—letter to Elena Shavrova, 11/17/95 (Friedland, 85)

When one has written a story, one should delete the beginning and the end. And one must speak briefly, more briefly . . ." (quoted in Ehrenburg, p. 60)

Abridge, brother, abridge. Begin at the second page.
—letter to Alexander Chekhov, 8/30/93 (Friedland, 72)

Superfluous expressions

You must reject the superflous, polish away such expressions as by means of that, by aid of that.
—letter to Lydia Avilov, 2/15/95 (Yarmolinsky, 295)

Detailed descriptions of characters

Describing in detail how five people look overburdens the reader's span of attention, and ultimately loses all value. Clean-shaven actors resemble one another like Catholic priests, and they'll go on resembling one another no matter how much effort you put into describing them.
—letter to Kuprin, 11/1/02 (Heim, 432)

Modifiers

When you read proof, cross out as many modifiers of nouns and verbs as you can. You have so many modifiers that the reader has a hard time figuring out what deserves his attention, and it tires him out. If I write, "A man sat down on the grass," it is understandable because it is clear and doesn't require a second reading. But it would be hard to follow and brain-taxing were I to write, "A tall, narrow-chested, red-bearded man of medium height sat down noiselessly, looking around timidly and in fright, on a patch of green grass that had been trampled by pedestrians." The brain can't grasp all of this at once, and the art of fiction ought to be immediately, instantaneously graspable.
—letter to Gorky, 9/3/99 (Heim, 362)

Wordy descriptions

/ Your / descriptions of objects are . . . mechanical. "The shelves on the wall were filled with books." Why not say simply, "The

> shelves of books," or just, "The bookshelves?" . . . You hold the reader's attention, and then tire it, since you detain him while you describe the disorder of a book-shelf.
>
> —letter to A. V. Zhirkevich, 2/4/96 (Friedland, 74)

Wordy descriptions of nature

> When I read them—these descriptions—I feel I'd like them to be shorter, more compact, only about two or three lines long. Frequent reference to languor, murmuring, plushness and the like give your descriptions a rhetorical quality and make them monotonous; they discourage the reader and become almost tiresome. . . ./ This / is neither a majestic sweep nor bold strokes of the brush; it is simply lack of restraint.
>
> —letter to Gorky, 12/3/98 (Heim; 332, 333)

Personification, compared to simplicity, in descriptions of nature

> . . . The frequent personification . . . when the sea breathes, the sky gazes, the steppe barks, nature whispers, speaks, mourns, and so on—such metaphors make your descriptions somewhat monotonous, sometimes sweetish, sometimes not clear; beauty and expressiveness in nature are attained only by simplicity, by such phrases as "The sun set," "It was dark," "It began to rain," and so on.
>
> —letter to Gorky, 1/3/99 (Heim, 338)

NOTES

[1] These "boots" refer to a poem by Pushkin, in which the Greek painter Apelles advises a presumptuous bootmaker to pass judgment only on things he can understand (Heim, 120).

[2] Between 1888 and 1892, Chekhov made an investigative trip to the Russian penal colony, the island of Sakhalin. After experiencing the horrors of Sakhalin, Chekhov's views on the social responsibility of a writer changed. He realized "that the truth could be bare and impotent standing by itself, and . . . that the writer must not only find the truth but he must wrap it up and take it somewhere" (Hellman, xxiii). The next quotation I cite, from the "lemonade" letter of Nov. 25, 1892, reflects Chekhov's changed attitude (as does his short novel of the same year, Ward Number Six).

[3] Leontyev-Shchlegov had quarreled with Pyotr Weinberg, chairman of a government bureau on the arts (Heim, 377).

[4] Fontanka was the name of a small river in St. Petersburg.

[5] One critic, referring to Chekhov, observes that "the impact of emotions, of distress, delight, or grief and joy, is felt much stronger when they are suggested than when they are described." Charles Timmer, "The Bizarre Element in Chekhov's Art," in Eugene K. Bristow, Ed., Anton Chekhov's Plays (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 281.

[6] Stala and perestala are the Russian words for "became" and "ceased."

[7] Another writer on Chekhov mentions Voltaire's remark, "Le secret d'etre ennuyeux, c'est tout dire," and then comments, "It is because Chekhov says so little that he reveals so much." Francis Fergusson, "The Cherry Orchard," in Bristow, *op. cit*.

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USING ESSAY CONTESTS IN THE CLASSROOM: FOR FUN, FOR PROFIT, FOR PRACTICAL WRITING EXPERIENCES

Suzanna G. Colby

After many semesters of teaching senior composition classes, I began searching for something new to keep me from becoming stagnant and losing interest in the classes. I did overall enjoy teaching. I had previously ignored essay contests because I felt they infringed upon my lesson plans. The contest information arrived at times my students were already involved in an essay assignment and I didn't feel it fair to tack another to their work load for no legitimate reason.

My philosophy has since changed. Three years ago, a local Realtors' essay contest came to my attention. My classes were being readied to start an essay, so I had the students write an essay to enter the contest. The guidelines called for a standard five paragraph essay identical to that studied in class. I submitted all the essays to the contest unless a student objected for personal reasons to the essay's being sent. After a student won the third place prize and seven out of fifteen were awarded honorable mentions, I knew my classes would, in the future, be entering more writing contests. Furthermore, the students' delight at hearing that their or their classmates' writing abilities had been recognized by "outsiders" convinced me that essay contests could be valuable teaching and learning experiences.

A counselor once told me that money for students was available from many non-profit organizations and businesses but often went unclaimed because students wouldn't take the initiative to write the essay required. With that in mind, I taught the Advanced Placement students how to develop a research paper, and armed with this knowledge they entered the Western Savings Scholarship Essay Contest. To our surprise, five students received $250.00 as semi-finalists and one of the five walked away with a $4,000 scholarship. These students said that they never would have considered writing a research paper on their own without some motivation. Students entering other writing contests felt the same. Thirty-three different pupils received awards from honorable mention to $4,250.00 during the 1981-1982 school year for essays submitted to contests.

In addition to the prizes, I was especially pleased when students not often recognized for their writing abilities received awards. The winners assumed an air of self-esteem and were eyed by their peers with a new respect. The students, in general, seemed encouraged to work harder at learning to improve their writing skills.

The essay contests have now become an integral part of my writing program. I assign no more than two contests per semester. The students know, however, that they are not writing only for the competition. Since it is an assignment, they have to meet the standards established for composing the essay as studied in class. If we are working to develop parallel structure, then examples of this must be in the essay to satisfy the requirements. Writing the essay is, first of all, a learning experience.

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Students submit a polished rough draft, as they do for other essays, that I check for errors in grammar, spelling, unity, or problems in logic. I offer suggestions for improvement as any editor would do before publishing a piece. Students then produce a final typed copy to submit for competition. I collect the rough drafts, which are kept in file folders, and I mail the final essays in plenty of time to meet the contest deadline.

Since the essay contest can be a positive teaching method, other instructors may wish to enter their students' writing in one or more of the many competitions offered each year. Interested teachers should ask counselors, Social Studies people, and English department heads to share information about contests as they receive it. Radio spots and newspapers are often sources which publicize contests sponsored for young people.

To motivate students' interest in writing for essay contests, I have found the following steps to be helpful.

STEPS TO SUCCESS:

1. Enthusiasm: Sell the contest to the students with an excited voice.
2. Encouragement: Anyone can win. Competition is still limited even though more students are beginning to enter.
3. Appearance: So very important. The essay should be meticulous. Margins, spacing, cover page, etc. must conform to accepted standards. Everyone knows the value of a good first impression.
4. Standards: Depending on the ability level of the students, establish criteria students must reach: complete sentences, traditional grammar usage, organization. No spelling errors; use active voice.
5. Focus: Make sure students understand the topic proposed for the contest. Identify the audience that will read the essays.
6. Guidelines: If any rules are included in the contest information, follow them explicitly. Otherwise, establish some rules the students must follow.
7. Pride: Glow over the completed essays and remind the students how good a job well done feels.
8. Winners: Be sure everyone who 'should' know, administrators, parents, other teachers, and students, is aware of the student receiving an award, whether it be an honorable mention or a generous monetary prize.
9. Non-Winners: Let all the students who wrote for the contest share in the triumph.

READING AND WRITING: IS THERE A CONNECTION?

Bonnie L. Miller

A fish without water . . . a flower without sunshine . . . a rainbow without color . . . UNTHINKABLE . . . you say.

What do you think about the notion of reading without writing? Unfortunately, for the child's sake, you don't respond to this idea in the same way you did to the ideas of a fish without water, a flower without sunshine, or a rainbow without color. Why?

What's so important about the notion of reading and writing being taught together? Should the teacher automatically think about the language strand of the curriculum as including both reading and writing? How are reading and writing alike? Can they be related in the classroom, and if so, how can the connection be made? Does the teacher have to be SUPERTEACHER to survive in a classroom where the focus is on making the connection between reading and writing? What about the learner—what are the benefits of a curriculum which includes both reading and writing in the language strand?

Donald Graves, who has done extensive research with children and the writing process, expresses many concerns about the state of writing in this country in his article "We Won't Let Them Write." This article was written by Graves (1978) as a result of research done in the United States, England and Scotland.

Graves says,

> Writing is extolled, worried over, cited as a national priority, but seldom practiced. The problem with writing is not poor spelling, punctuation, grammar, and handwriting. The problem with writing is no writing. Reading has been overstressed, often at the expense of writing. Even more serious is our growing insistence that students be solely proficient in receiving information, rather than in sending it. This not only hurts writing, but reading as well (p. 636).

Courtney Cazden (1980) says, "One would expect, simply by definition, that language arts education should include the development of competencies in expressing ideas (productive language) as well as competencies in understanding the ideas of others (receptive language), and in both oral and written modes." She explains, however, that "in actual practice children's time is spent overwhelmingly in listening and reading" (p. 595). Most classroom instruction is spent on something other than writing.

Reading and writing should be learned together since both are language processes, according to Roger Shuy (1982). He says, "It is unfortunate that writing and

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reading have been separated into different curriculum events" (p. 807). Shuy explains that children should be shown how the skills they have acquired during learning to read apply to learning to write. He believes that the Language-Experience Approach (LEA) is useful for accomplishing this. Marie Clay (1977) also says, "The child who learns to read with a language-experience approach to natural language texts, works down through that hierarchy (analytically) as he learns to read his books, and up through that hierarchy (synthetically) as he learns to write stories" (p. 65).

Shuy (1982) also stresses that the teaching of reading and writing should be integrated in a natural way. The learner should come to think of reading and writing as a means of getting things done. He says;

> the language strand not only motivates by making language real but also offers insights into what to look for in the reading process, namely, how to comprehend what the writer was trying to say (p. 812).

Clay (1975) also says that a reading and writing program, whose emphasis is on meaning, is necessary in any classroom. She believes that

> In the child's early contact with written language, writing behaviors seem to play the role of organizers of reading behaviors. Writing is not the only means of expressing ideas in written language . . . but it does appear to help the child to come to grips with learning to attend to the significant details of written language (p. 3).

Mauree Applegate (1963) emphasizes the value of integrating the reading/writing process when she says, ". . . writing enriches reading . . . it tunes the ear to the rhythms in all life . . ." (p. 12).

The relationship that exists between reading and writing and its effect on both the reader and writer is further explained by Macrorie (1976) when he says,

> A good part of the time he is writing, a writer must sense his reader out there. . . . In a sense a writer becomes his own reader while he writes. He talks to his reader and hears that talk himself. When you acquire that knack, other persons will come along with you. Easy as this habit is to learn, many persons will never learn it. They are like those who try to turn a piece of pottery on the wheel and never create a cup which holds coffee (p. 9).

Macrorie is saying that writers should write like readers, while Frank Smith (1982) says, "The key to learning about writing from reading is to read like a writer" (p. 179).

Both Smith and Macrorie are stressing the integrative nature of the reading/writing process; implicit in the notions of both Macrorie and Smith is the very important element of meaning.

How does a child learn to "read like a writer?" Smith (1982) says,

> The different aspects of a productive writing environment cannot be separated from each other and delivered to children

> one bit at a time. Reading, writing, talking about writing, and talking in order to write must be continual possibilities; they overlap and interlock. In theory, reading begins with the teacher reading to children, then with them, and finally with the children reading for themselves. In practice, however, children able to read some texts for themselves will still learn more from other texts that are read to them. Reading alone and being read to can each be a welcome relief from each other. Similarly with writing. It is not the case that the teacher should first write for the child, then with the child, and then leave the child alone. Rather, the matter is one of accessibility; teachers have to develop a sense of when to offer help, when to intervene, and when to stand back (p. 202).

Learning to write, like learning to read, does not develop in a neat and orderly fashion. According to Smith (1982),

> writing is not learned in steps; there is no ladder of separate and incremental skills to be ascended. Writing develops as an individual develops, in many directions, continually, usually inconspicuously, but occasionally in dramatic and unforeseeable spurts. And, like individual human development, writing requires nourishment and encouragement rather than a restraining regimen (p. 203).

The following statements made by Smith (1982, pp. 203-204) about how teachers can help children develop certain aspects of writing are very important because many point out the integrative relationship between reading and writing.

> Interest is developed by showing enthusiasm, providing demonstrations, by reading to children what they find interesting and by helping them to write what they find interesting.
>
> Sensitivity grows if children assume they can be writers and is destroyed if their expectations are demolished.
>
> Spelling is fostered by providing spellings as they are required (to help the child), recognizing that spelling is primarily learned through reading and can be an obstacle to writing that children should be helped to overcome.
>
> Punctuation is learned through reading and in use, when something a child has written or wants to write is conventionally punctuated. Children will not learn to punctuate if they are unable or afraid to write texts of sufficient complexity for punctuation to make a difference.
>
> Grammar comes partly through "correction" . . . when there is a desire to say something clearly and partly through sensitivity in reading to written language that a child finds interesting and comprehensible.
>
> Composition is learned in practice, when separated from the

> constraints of transcription, and stimulated by reading, discussion, and the opportunity for private reflection.
>
> *Ideas* develop from interaction and dialogue—with other people . . . with books, films, and drama, and especially with one's own writing. Ideas grow through exchange.
>
> *Fluency* comes with increasing speed, confidence and the avoidance of psychological blocks. The best springboard for writing still to come is writing already done.
>
> *Neatness* comes last, part of a final cleaning up if there is some purpose for it. Consideration of neatness should not slow down composition.

Smith's belief that reading and writing should be learned by children just as they learned to talk, i.e. naturally, without an awareness of the skills being learned may seem, as Smith puts it, "radical". However, when his recommendations for teaching reading and writing are considered, this belief may not seem so radical after all. Smith (1982) says,

> teachers and children together should use writing (and reading, spoken language, art, and drama) to learn other things. Writing should be used to tell stories and produce artifacts—books to be published, poems to be recited, songs to be sung, plays to be acted, letters to be delivered, programs to be consulted, newspapers to be distributed, advertisements to be displayed, complaints to be aired, ideas to be shared, worlds to be constructed and explored (p. 211).

Smith emphasizes that teachers need to show children that reading and writing do make sense and that there is much more to learning than boring drills, "busywork and test-oriented activities that are irrelevant for learning to read or write, but cannot be avoided" (p. 211).

James Britton (1970) also believes that children should learn to write just as naturally as they learned to talk. Britton says that not only do children learn to write by writing, but they also learn from writing. He believes that children learn from writing when they write about their experiences. It is in the process of interpreting their experiences through the writing process that learning takes place. Britton stresses the importance of using the child's world or experiences when he says,

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> everytime a child succeeds in writing about something that has happened to him or something he has been thinking, two things are likely to happen. First he has improved his chances of doing so the next time he tries; in other words, his piece of writing has given him practice. And, secondly, he has interpreted, shaped, coped with, some bit of experience (p. 29).

Ronald Cramer (1978) also talks about using children's natural language and experiences in the classroom to motivate writing. He believes that "No higher gift of literacy can be passed on to our children than the desire and the ability to write" (p. 2). He also believes that children should have the freedom to write about the world as they see it from their point of view. According to Cramer, a successful writing program is a means of producing "an abundance of useful reading materials written by children" (p. 3).

Hoskisson (1979, p. 894) believes that "children must be introduced to the written form of the language by being read to." He also says that children need more time for writing in school and stresses that "writing should be center stage" (p. 895). He maintains that writing will also help children with reading and learning in the content areas.

In a recent review of the current research on writing, Marie Clay (1982, p. 67) asks the question, "How much writing do children do?" Her answer is "Very little." Her next question is "How do we get children to write more?" In answer to this question, Clay says that we must be more accepting of children's attempts to write. We must respect their approximations as they become writers. Classrooms should be secure and friendly places where the child trusts the teacher to help him develop as a writer.

Clay says, "If we do not set out to convince first graders that writing is difficult, they probably will not arrive at grade 2 convinced of it" (p. 67).

How are reading and writing alike? First of all, Kenneth Goodman (1976) says that reading is language. Writing is also a language process. Reading is receptive, while writing is generative. Secondly, readers are users of language, and they use language to discover the writer's intended meaning. Murray (1968) says that the purpose of writing is to explore and discover meaning. According to Smith (1982) and Murray 91968), a good reader asks himself "Does this make sense?" A good writer also asks "Does this make sense?" The purpose of both reading and writing is to learn by "making sense." Glenda Bissex (1981, p. 788) supports the premise of Smith and Murray when she says that "Good writers have been found to focus first on meaning, while poor writers, conceiving of good writing as correct writing, focus from the start on correctness and neatness, on avoiding errors." This observation of the poor writer is supported by research done by Sondra Perl (1980) with unskilled writers at the community college level. She believes that the lack of proficiency of the poor writers may be due to their premature corrections since they view good writing as correct writing. This premature correction and editing affects the meaning the writer is trying to convey since the emphasis is not on meaning but on correctness. In other words, the writer isn't "writing like a reader" or "reading like a writer" as emphasized by both Macrorie (1976) and Smith (1982).

Bissex (1981, p. 789) believes that "children can be taught to be poor writers or good writers." Whether or not the child is a good or poor writer depends upon the role of the teacher. If the teacher is open and accepting and responds openly and positively to the child's writing, chances are s/he will become a good writer who focuses on meaning.

Reading and writing are both language processes where the use of language cue systems must operate in an interdependent manner if meaning is to be found. Carolyn Burke (1976, p. 15) says, "Reading stops when any one of its three necessary systems—graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic—is segregated from the process."

Burke explains that

> Reading involves an interaction between the language process of the reader and the language process of the author. Readers examine a piece of text on the basis of the control they have of language. They have available to them the context and the organization of their own language systems. Authors write their texts on the basis of their control of language and have available to them the content and organization of their language systems (p. 17).

Finally, Burke says, "The operation of the reading/writing process can be viewed as three dimensional—with the graphic material and the processes of the language being intersected by the reader/author" (1976, p. 22).

Reading and writing are not exact processes. Children bring their intuitive knowledge and their experiences to the printed page (Goodman 1976; Bissex 1981). Murray (1968, p. 7) also says, "The writer understands writing is a process, not a rigid procedure."

Reading and writing are both processes where children must be active participants. In other words, children learn to read by reading and to write by writing. It only makes sense—do children learn to swim without swimming?

A teacher does not have to be SUPERTEACHER to survive in a classroom where reading and writing are learned together. However, a teacher would be considered a SUPERTEACHER if the following premises about the reading/writing process were evident in the language arts strand of the curriculum in his/her classroom. These premises are:

1. Reading and writing are both language processes which should both be included in the language arts strand.

2. Children will learn to read and write when they are shown how the two processes are related.

3. Children learn to read and write when presented with meaningful experiences from which they can operate.

4. Children need to be "read to" and "talked to" as they learn to read and write; oral language interaction is a most important ingredient in the learning process.

5. The purpose for learning to read and write is to discover and express meaning.

6. Reading and writing are not exact processes. The child needs the opportunity to "try out" his language in learning to read and write.

7. The immersion of the child in language through speaking, listening, reading and writing provides an environment where children can learn "naturally."

8. Reading and writing are both language processes where the language cue systems (syntactic, semantic and graphophonic) must operate interdependently if meaning is to be found.

Finally, the most important role of the SUPERTEACHER should be one of helping the child benefit by learning to "read like a writer" and "write like a reader."

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MYTHOLOGY AND MATURATION

Wilma Bell

"Why are you teaching us all this Greek stuff?" This is a student you've all met: the one who knows there's a good reason but wants to force you into taking a public position on the issue. After thoroughly enjoying the role of Second Period Iconoclast, this closet scholar will score in the top ten percent on your hardest test.

My reply, when confronted with the question last year, was a hastily pounced-upon justification like, "So you'll be able to read poetry in high school." I think I gave it credibility by tossing off a couple of lines from the Romantics: "no, no, go not to Lethe. . . ." and, with theatrical emotion, "Weep for Adonais. He is dead." It was enough to get me through the moment, perhaps, but I made a mental note to mull it over in my thinking chair at the first opportunity and get together a pedagogically sound answer. When I finally found one, I decided that, as it is beyond the realm of teaching for content, it was worth sharing with others.

To begin with, I dismissed the idea that spending a large segment of the year's "allotted" literature time on myth had to be justified at all. I had not found myth. Myth had found me—and my students. Everywhere we looked—in the Science book, at the movies, in TV commercials, in the newspapers, on automobiles, on the map, on the athletic field—we found traces of the gods and goddesses. Consider merely the list of words that have been derived from the water serpent Hydra (hydrant, hydraulic, hydroelectric, hydrophobia, hydroplan, hydroponic, hydrometer, dehydrate) to understand the importance attached to the usual approaches to teaching mythology. But my approach goes further than studying it for the value of allusions and derivatives; it goes even further than the extracting of "morals" from the stories. By the time we are working on our mythology-related writing assignments, we have entered a new dimension in learning.

In the very beginning of a unit (an inadequate term; it is too short in duration to describe the length of time needed to really "get into" mythology) some students find the polysyllabic names and the cosmic background data that make up the Olympian scene troublesome. Nevertheless, they thoroughly enjoy the stories in which the gods and heroes amusingly entangle themselves, and their curiosities are actually piqued to the extent that they are continually inquiring where more "stories like that" can be found. For about six weeks every year our middle-school librarians actually find Edith Hamilton out-doing Judy Blume at the check-out counter.

The richness of the resource is, of course, the cornerstone of my justification for spending so much time on mythology. The university of human experience both surprises and reassures us that men and women and boys and girls acted and reacted three thousand years ago the same as they do today. As we read and watch filmstrips and movies, I can see girls wince as Pluto comes out of the chasm in the earth to kidnap Persephone; I catch boys nodding in affirmation as Phaethon asks permission to drive his father's Sun Chariot. The writing assignments which grow out of our study are natural extensions of such students' interests.

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The first assignment is a creative writing opportunity which teaches them how to use the autobiographical (first person) point-of-view in addition to their continuing, personal exploration of mythology.

> Find a mythological character in whom you are particularly interested. Write the story he or she appears in from his or her point-of-view. Pretend you are telling it to a newspaper or magazine. You want to tell it from "your side" to set the records straight.

After I introduce them to the rules for using this controlled point-of-view, I read several excerpts from stories to show them how it is used. Moving briefly into another realm of mythology is particularly effective here: they love John Gardner's Grendel and, after hearing only a page or so, can imitate the technique almost as easily as they can dance steps from Soul Train or American Bandstand.

With their choice of a character and their adoption of the pseudo-autobiographical technique, certain psychological forces are set in motion. These forces are illuminated by Bruno Bettelheim, who, in The Uses of Enchantment (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pleads for the reintroduction of fairy tales—a genre very similar to myth in psychological content—in the lives of children.

Using Freudian interpretations of many well-known tales, Bettelheim suggests their therapeutic value as a way for a child to externalize or sublimate his or her inner fantasies. He maintains that a child can take great comfort in Giant tales, for instance, in which the tiny Jacks always outsmart the Giants (which is what adults seem to be to very small children). In fantasy, the child finds an inner satisfaction whereas, in reality, he would not risk condemnation for openly wishing to get the best of some adult. The modus operandi is the same for children hearing the most familiar of all tales. They can take comfort in the knowledge that an adult super-ego (the Woodcutter) will protect them from precociously entering into an adult relationship with an adult libido (the Wolf) despite their own imprudent behavior.

Vicarious satisfaction and the delight of fantasy make this mode of instruction a particularly effective way of dealing with the subconscious longings and anxieties that are encountered in the maturation process. And since the subconscious fears or desires are not—and should never be—made explicit, the child is never threatened by the risk of psychic exposure. Myth can be the literary equivalent of the situational cliche: "Doctor, I've got this friend who has a problem. . . ."

As for my students' point-of-view assignment, many girls find a suitable sublimation for their budding sexuality in their accounts of Psyche's nocturnal encounters with Cupid. Naturally, I make no mention of this aspect of their writing. Bettelheim clearly warns adults: never bring the psychoanalytic content to conscious recognition lest the enchantment turn to devastation.

Of particular interest in this assignment was one young man's effort to bring Vulcan's story of maternal rejection alive. He followed directions superbly, even increasing the urgency of the tale by using present tense verbs and imitating the tone of existential anguish he had heard in Grendel.

> As I look down over the cliff, the wind blowing across me, I think of falling. I am young but wise. From looking at my mother's face I know I am unwanted.
>
> My mother lets out a hell-frightening scream and proceeds to throw me over the cliff. While falling, a thought flashes through my mind. If only I were a bird. But the thought vanishes.
>
> I find myself alive but in great misery. With no one to help me, my bones heal warped and crooked. For years I live by myself off whatever I can find.
>
> Then a stranger walks up to me. He appears kind and says, "I am Hermes. The gods sent me."
>
> I ask myself: What is going on? I never heard of any gods, and who is this Hermes? He is strange. He has wings on his shoes and helmet.
>
> Now he says in a comforting way, "Do you have a name?" There is a pause. "Then we will call you Vulcan."
>
> And so I became Vulcan. But now, even now, I remember the look on my mother's face on that fateful day so long ago.

It remains the best piece of eighth grade writing ever to cross my desk, and my subsequent discovery that the writer comes from a broken home and often stays with his grandparents made me aware of the emotional resources he might have drawn upon to write such a moving account of a maternal atrocity.

In another writing assignment which grew out of our study of mythology, I attempt to teach the classical plot of the short story without the obligatory Aristotelian diagram of beginning / rising action / crisis / resolution, providing the students instead with a purloined skeleton plot which they can flesh out and dress in the garb most familiar to them. Secure in the knowledge that Shakespeare, Joyce, Mann—a host of first-rate creative plagiarists—have been doing this for years, I show my students how to "borrow." In the new literature books our school system recently adopted is an excellent introduction to the technique: "Antaeus" by Borden Deal.

In the title of the story is the only reference to mythology. Antaeus was a giant whose strength lasted only as long as his feet were in contact with the earth. Borden Deal's story is of a Southern boy whose family has joined the great migration to Chicago in the 1930's. Deprived there of his joyful earth connection, T. J. persuades a group of city boys to haul enough dirt up onto a roof top to plant a garden in it. When the building's owner finds it and orders them to remove their six-months' effort, T. J. disappears, word having it that he's headed back to Alabama alone.

After reading "Anteaus" and discovering how the slight reference in the title gives the story a universal dimension, I ask my students to re-read the myth of Phaethon. Then we brainstorm the ways in which the story of teenagers who drive their father's Sun Chariot to a disastrous end could be paralleled in a modern setting. It is a skeleton plot which seventh and eighth graders can easily flesh out in present-day specifics close to their own autobiographical center.

That Phaethon had grown up without a father-in-residence leads to story situations in which Jimmy's dad had left his mom years ago . . . Tony's dad lives with his second wife and her kids and is behind in his support payments . . . Marsha's dad lives in an expensive apartment over on the other side of town. . . . They all have their own experience to roughly parallel the life situation of Phaethon and his father, Apollo; and the Sun Chariot most often takes the form of a shiny new Trans Am with a firebird (Phoenix? Mythology is everywhere.) painted across the hood. How well they all understand the position of a father rendered vulnerable by his guilt feelings. Such a reunion would be the perfect time to ask for a car, and a Trans Am is little price to pay for sixteen years of neglect.

What these students are doing is externalizing problems that are a real part of their own lives, projecting them, as it were, on fictitious characters so distanced from themselves in time that it is perfectly safe to resolve the characters' dilemmas as their own inner selves desire. After all, when one writes about someone who is NOT-ME, nothing counts. Yet everything counts, especially with the "Greek stuff."

In the Phaethon story, as in many tales and myths, an archetypal drama is played out. A boy at the threshold of manhood asserts himself prematurely. Relating the situation to Eric Erikson's maturation scale, Phaethon is at the level where establishing one's identity must take place for the maturation process to continue. The outcome, of course, is the reverse of the happy Jack-and-the-Giant tales. The young hero has underestimated the strength and skill required to hold Apollo's horses on course. Under these circumstances, the Giant, Apollo, survives. Jack's reckless surge toward identity is thwarted.

I am convinced that this lesson in short story writing carries with it great potential for emotional release and / or development. Unconsciously, the students are vicariously experiencing what sons and daughters have experienced from the beginning of human time: the need to be a self in one's own right. And in assuming the persona of a character based on a myth distanced by thousands of years, they safely allow their own subconscious forces to work it out. As the papers come in, this process becomes apparent.

The Trans Ams, of course, are nearly always "totaled." There are broken arms, legs, backs, pelvises. Yet, significantly, no one ever dies in the wreck. None of my young writers ever ends the up-dated version the way the classical story ended. They are obviously unable to accept death, oblivion, nothingness. And it is little wonder, for that comes three plateaus beyond the identity—establishing plateau in Erikson's levels of maturation—and several decades later in their lives.

Silently, then, I accept their flawed (in the Aristotelian sense) tragedies, but I am far from being disappointed. I am gratified, rather, at the incredible results of these follies with fast cars. I encounter hospital-bed reconciliations of fathers and sons, mothers and fathers and sons, fathers and daughters, fathers and mothers. In these amateurish scenes, these poignant, half-exposed wishes, it becomes apparent that the rivers of the unconscious have surfaced momentarily and brought relief to a land of drought.

When I am asked about the "Greek stuff" next time (and there will, of course, be a next time), I'll be prepared. I'll tell the student that I teach it not only because it is

the basis of Western culture, not only for the classical allusions with which one must be familiar to read the daily paper, let alone Keats and Shelley, not only for the hundreds of derivatives it has bestowed upon our language, but also to permit him and the others to participate in the universal experiences that are embodied in it. And I am confident I can elaborate upon that, if necessary, without actually saying that I teach it to provide them an acceptable avenue to psychological growth and inner peace.

A Friendly Lap and a Good Story: Best Formula for Future Success in Reading

"Children who take to reading in school as if it were ice cream have one thing in common," says Linda Leonard Lamme. "Those children were read to." Lamme headed a committee of language arts specialists who wrote LEARNING TO LOVE LITERATURE: PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 3, a new book of helpful ideas for teachers and others working with young children.

In an age preoccupied with "basics," Lamme holds out against unrelieved drill from basal readers and worksheets. Because such drill divorces reading from enjoyment, she says, it bores the children who are ready to read and frustrates those who are less advanced.

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LEARNING TO LOVE LITERATURE: PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 3, ed. Linda Leonard Lamme. 98 pages, paper. Price $9.50; NCTE members $8. ISBN: 0-8141-2787-8. LC: 81-14076. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 27878.

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THE RESPONSES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS TO THREE SHORT STORIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM SELECTION

Susan G. Bennett

The ways in which readers respond to literature have been of concern to researchers for centuries. In recent history, social scientists (Allport, 1935; Barlow, 1937; Festinger, 1957), philosophers and psychologists (Bettelheim, 1975; Harding, 1962; Holland, 1968), literary critics (Richards, 1929; Rosenblatt, 1976), and educators (Cooper, 1969; Loban, 1954; Purves, 1968, 1972; Russell, 1958; Squire, 1968; Wilson, 1966) have investigated the phenomenon of reader response. The combined research from these different perspectives has indicated some general conclusions:

1) Before early adolescence, readers rarely reach the cognitive developmental stage necessary to infer much that is implied in a reading selection. At the very least, a combination of reading and class discussion is necessary for optimal response.

2) Readers cling stubbornly to their attitudes, and these attitudes alter their interpretations of what they read. Therefore, one cannot expect "the book to change the reader" since, as likely as not, "the reader will change the book."

3) Many obstacles—affective, cognitive, psychological, pedagogical—block the reading process. Often readers are unable to get beyond the level of factual comprehension, and too often they misinterpret what they read.

Unfortunately, as dependence on the written word grows and as universal literacy becomes an expectation of many societies, general descriptions of reader response are not adequate. Furthermore, educators from grades 1 through 16 are being called upon to produce more insightful, proficient readers. Successful literature and reading programs depend on curriculum materials and instructional methods exploiting the reader/text interaction.

Heretofore, research investigating response to literature has concentrated on either cognitive processes or affective variables. But as the above third trend indicates, numbers of factors acting upon each other enhance or impede appropriate reader response. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the correlation of two variables, level of moral development and mode of response, which include both cognitive and affective problem-solving dimensions.

Supporting Research

Moral development theory examines the ways in which an individual responds to "real world" problems, many of the same ones universalized through literature. In fact, one of the dilemmas used in the Defining Issues Test (James Rest, 1972, The Escaped Prisoner) borrows its plot from the novel Les Miserables. Therefore, it seems reasonable to compare the responses of youths to literature with their reactions to a measure of moral development. Both responses to literature and moral reasoning are descriptions of one's strategies for dealing with abstract moral problems: the primary

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concerns of many secondary school students who are learning to cope with the larger issues of humankind's existence (Carlsen, 1980). If English educators are to achieve their aims of aiding students in understanding and utilizing literature as a tool for human growth, then they need to be aware of the constraints placed upon pupils' abilities to interpret what they read. To this end, this study examines the interaction between an adolescent reader's level of moral development and response to literature.

Previous research on response to literature has identified seven inclusive modes of response. The most common is the interpretive mode. In adolescent readers, one can expect this kind of response approximately 40% to 60% of the time. The other modes, none expected more than 20% of the time, include narrative, when the reader retells the story without attempting to derive meaning; associational, when the reader relates an aspect of the story to an irrelevant past experience; prescriptive, when the reader blames a character for an outcome without attempting to understand motivation; literary judgment, when the reader disregards intent and only remarks on his/her opinion of the story's quality; self-involvement, when a reader overempathizes with a character and disregards other aspects of the work; and miscellaneous, which occurs less than 2% of the time. Interestingly, the preferred mode of literary response is not highly correlated with such factors as I.Q., sex, reading ability, etc. (Squire, 1964; Wilson, 1963).

I contend that some of the skills demanded for properly grasping the concepts and intents of literature are the same skills which correspond to different stages of moral development. (See Appendix p. 13) As Kohlberg emphasizes, each developmental stage is qualitatively different from each previous stage (Kohlberg, 1973). The developmental process is not simply cumulative; it represents a structural change in the individual's problem-solving strategies and offers that individual a different way of looking at his/her world. Therefore, I designed this study to examine whether the qualitatively different perspective of students operating at the highest level of moral development, that is, the Post-conventional, would predict that they would approach short stories through the interpretive mode.

Subjects

To research this question, I tested students in six secondary English classrooms in a public high school in the San Francisco Bay Area. The school is located in an upper-middle-class suburb with very few minority families. For this study, the analysis was limited to Caucasian male students, to limit the number of variables to be considered. Altogether, I ended up with complete protocols for 74 subjects, ages 14 through 18.

Table 1

Grade Level and Ages of Subjects

Grade Level	Age in Years					Total
	14	15	16	17	18	
9	3	7				10
10		14	15			29
11			12	11		23
12				9	3	12
Total	3	21	27	20	3	74

Method

To test for the students' levels of moral development, I administered a group test developed by James Rest at The University of Minnesota. This test, the Defining Issues Test or DIT includes six moral dilemmas each followed by twelve statements—two representing each stage of moral development. However, since when presented with logical arguments, persons will often prefer a statement one stage above their operational stage on the DIT, stage one responses are eliminated. Instead, nonsensical statements are included to see if respondents are trying to score 'high' by choosing what sound like the most sophisticated answers. Additionally, Rest includes some 'Anti-establishment' responses. Although these are disregarded in stage-typing, Rest sees them as evidence of a transition between stages four and five. (Rest, 1972)

After the student has reacted on paper to each statement from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" or "don't understand," he then ranks the four statements which best describe his preferences for solving the moral dilemma. Since there are great differences between the interview technique used by Kohlberg and forced-choice measures, Rest advises against stage-typing. Instead, his measure allows the researcher to arrive at a 'P' or Principled score. This score is the percentage of a respondent's preferences for statements representing Post-Conventional thinking.

A week after they had responded to the DIT, the students simultaneously read and heard on tape three short stories. After each story, they were given a response sheet of 12 items that they ranked from "most descriptive" to "not at all descriptive" pertaining to their initial reactions to each story. Of the 12 statements, two represented each mode of literary response, with the exception of miscellaneous, which was used for cases of no response to a particular item. Then participants chose and ranked the three statements that best described their reactions. These rankings were analyzed to arrive at an 'I' score (Interpretive). Any student with a weighted score of ten (10) of a possible sixteen (16) was classified as an interpreter.

Following this, participants were asked to answer four questions: What was the story? What were their reasons for their preferences? These responses were analyzed as units of thought and related to the students' preferred mode of response and level of moral development. Finally, after all the stories had been completed, the participants were asked to rank their three favorite characters.

All of the stories, "The Young Man and the Mouse" by William Saroyan (Saroyan, 1958); "After Twenty Years" by O'Henry (1906); "All the Years of Her Life" by Morley Callaghan (1936), had central male characters, presented a moral dilemma, and provided a number of perspectives on loyalty, the law, and property.

Results

As shown on the following table, I found significant results. Using a chi-square test, I verified that readers operating at the principled level of moral development did, in this sample, choose the interpretive mode of response more frequently than students at lower levels, at the .05 level of statistical significance. Furthermore, the lower the raw 'P' score, the smaller the percentage of interpretive responses.

Table 2

Number of Respondents	Raw 'P' Score Range	% of Interpretive Responses
30	less than .26	21%
34	between .26 and .40	37%
10	.40 or greater	60%*
74	'P' = 10	'I' = 24

* .05 level of statistical significance

There was no apparent relationship between level of moral development and character preference; regardless of 'P', three-quarters of all the respondents chose as their favorite a character who had been betrayed or victimized as opposed to a character that had not. One was a mouse; one was a middle-aged woman; one was a notorious gangster. One of the findings of previous response to literature studies is that students, especially boys, prefer reading about characters like themselves. (Loban, 1954). In this study, students at all reading levels overwhelmingly identified the mouse, woman, and gangster as "least like themselves," albeit on superficial criteria; nevertheless they chose them as their favorites. Reading level did not correlate with 'I' or highly with 'P'. And, numbers of free responses on the four questions did not correlate with 'P' or highly with 'I'.

Discussion

The implications of this study are of use to teachers and curriculum specialists. Educators need to recognize that not only does the literary seclection bring something to the reader, but that the reader brings something to the work. (Rosenblatt, 1976)

Not only does the reader contribute his/her decoding, encoding, comprehension skills, experiences, preferences, attitudes and values, but also, certain problem-solving skills heretofore unexamined—that is, those skills correlating to a student's level and stage of moral development. If, after replication, we find this to be true, both literature curriculum developers and classroom teachers can take these variables into account when making decisions about what to introduce to a class and how to organize instruction. This is not to say that teachers should become involved in evaluating and typing their students, but that educators need to be aware of an additional, significant aspect of human thinking—moral development—before making assumptions about the appropriateness of materials. For example, the evidence of a moral dilemma in the three short stories used in this study may account, in part, for the unexpected character preferences. That is, instead of identifying with the problems of the youthful, male character in each story, the students overwhelmingly preferred the character they perceived as having been treated unfairly. We may ask then, does the inclusion of a moral dilemma arouse sympathy in the reader and help him to identify with a wider range of characters? If nothing else, teachers must consider if perhaps a student's difficulty with a selection is a function of yet to be developed skills in problem-solving rather than an inability to correctly comprehend the purpose of a piece of literature.

Further, additional research may help us to recognize not only the effects of moral development on the teaching of literature but also the uses of literature in 'the development of abstract moral-problem-solving strategies. (Blatt, M. & Kohlberg, 1975; Cooke, 1972; Fisher, 2965; Greer, 1972; Kohlberg, 1972)

In conclusion, I submit that the evidence verifies that a relationship exists between an adolescent boy's level of moral development and his preferred mode of literary response. Those students with sophisticated strategies for approaching moral dilemmas also more frequently choose to approach literature through interpretation.

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Appendix

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Judgement

1. PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL

At this level the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but interprets these labels in terms of either the physical or the hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favors) or terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels. The level is divided into the following two stages:

Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation. The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness regardless of the human meaning or value of these consquences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority (the latter being Stage 4).

Stage 2: The instrumental relativist orientation. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the market place. Elements of fairness, of reciprocity and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," not of loyalty, gratitude or justice.

II. CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

At this level, maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group, or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences. The attitude is not only one of conformity to personal expectations and social order, but of loyalty to it, of actively maintaining, supporting, and justifying the order and of identifying with the persons or group involved in it. At this level, there are the following two stages:

Stage 3: The interpersonal concordance or "good boy - nice girl" orientation. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or "natural" behavior. Behavior is frequently judged by intention—"He means well" becomes important for the first time. One earns approval by being "nice."

Stage 4: The "law and order" orientation. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

III. POST-CONVENTIONAL, AUTONOMOUS, OR PRINCIPLED LEVEL

At this level, there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles which have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups. This level again has two stages:

Stage 5: The social-contract legalistic orientation generally with utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Aside from what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal "values" and "opinion." The result is an emphasis upon the "legal point of view," but with an emphasis upon the possibility of changing law in terms of rational considerations of social utility (rather than freezing it in terms of Stage 4 "law and order"). Outside the legal realm, free agreement, and contract is the binding element of obligation. This is the "official" morality of the American government and Constitution.

Stage 6: The universal ethical principle orientation. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden rule, the categorical imperative): they are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

From Readings in Moral Education, pp. 50-51.

CORMIER RECEIVES ALAN AWARD

The ALAN AWARD for significant contributions to the field of adolescent literature went this year to novelist Robert Cormier, author of THE CHOCOLATE WAR, I AM THE CHEESE, and AFTER THE FIRST DEATH. The award was presented at the NCTE Annual Convention in Washington, D.C. last November. Cormier's works were judged outstanding on the basis of "their impact on forthcoming works in the field, innovative creativity, and popularity over a long period of time. The selection committee cited THE CHOCOLATE WAR as Cormier's outstanding work.

THE CATHERINE WHEEL: BRIDGING ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD

Lynn A. Crandall

A major goal in teaching high school students to analyze works of fiction is to equip them with the critical tools that will help them consciously and skillfully open the doors to an understanding of literature and its application to Life. The quickest and surest route to this end is through a careful tracing of the effects that the events of a narrative have on the life of a single main character, usually the protagonist. A first step is to define the terms static character and dynamic character. Following this, students should be guided in formulating statements which reveal the degree, causes, and results of the change, if any, in the character's life. Once these governing topic statements have been formulated, the students find little difficulty in supporting their theses by tracing the change, or lack of it, in the character through the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative. Since bridging adolescence and adulthood is a theme central to the concerns of high school students as well as a great deal of excellent literature, tracing change in character in works of fiction focused on this theme results in student writing that promotes personal growth, critical thinking, and lively writing. Jean Stafford's The Catherine Wheel (The Echo Press, New York, 1951) is an overlooked novel which lends itself particularly well to this critical approach.

The Catherine Wheel is a symbolic psychological novel which represents the effect produced by external events upon the inner self of its main character, Katherine Congreve. Katherine is preoccupied throughout the narrative with dishonorable thoughts spawned by the awful jealousy and dashed hopes which are the result of the indifference of her parents and the rejection of her peers. The effect of their neglect upon her intractable personality results in her becoming stuck, immobilized in agonizing adolescence. Although to her friends and neighbors she appears a paragon of virtue and honor, the conflict that rages in her soul between her honor and her craving for love renders her static, unable to adjust to her environment, and this conflict ultimately destroys her.

Early in the narrative it is revealed that Katherine has always displayed a deep affinity for her father. The extent of this filial closeness is demonstrated when each day she is seen pausing in front of his portrait hanging in the stairwell leading to the room where she writes her journal. She adores and respects the memory of her father. In fact, it is clear that he held a position above all the other men in her life. She compares her own physical appearance to his, and she believes that in her lives on the power of his wit and dignity, character traits which she is committed to nurture in deference to his memory. Later on it is learned that this resplendent father never loved Katherine's mother, and that during her formative years, although he was interested in his daughter's mind, he was affectively indisposed to her. Unable or

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unwilling to look within herself or him for an explanation of this emotional indifference, Katherine blames her mother, feeling that her mother's unworthiness was the source of his greater emotive warmth for Katherine's adopted sister, Maeve. This, the first slight dealt the proud and sensitive young girl, casts the seeds of jealousy and stoic denial that will grow over the years and destroy her from within. Thinking that the way to his heart lies in emulating his character and intellectuality, she spends her youth closely observing the structure of the ivory tower in which he lived and the rarified atmosphere he breathed. Seeing that her non-intellectual mother had lost her father's love, Katherine disdains what she considers to be the silly and flighty behavior expected of women and resolves to rise beyond the inane concerns of feminine fads and parlor patter. She forcefully suppresses all emotional responses, directs her life with stern discipline, and concerns herself with matters of only the highest social and aesthetic tenor. In fact, as the reader looks back on Katherine's youth with her, the irony of this father-daughter relationship becomes clear. In her attempts to duplicate him, she had further estranged herself, for he was instead more emotionally attracted to Maeve's softer, warmer personality.

Stafford further enhances the sublime nature of this father-daughter relationship by drawing frequent parallels between it and the Jupiter-Minerva relationship in which the daughter springs full-grown and in his image from the forehead of the father. When she was thirteen, Katherine's father had given her a birthday gift that was to become a dominant symbol for the rest of her life, a statue of Minerva which she has enshrined in her rose garden and visits daily. The gardener who religiously tends the roses concocts a distinct perfume from them which becomes Katherine's own symbol. After a storm one day, the gardener is overheard, significantly, to bemoan the fact that many of the beautiful roses which have been named after Katherine have been torn upon their own thorns. Thus the rose garden shrine to Minerva stands as a symbol for the beautiful, sensitive young girl who tears herself on the thorns of self-imposed discipline and impossibly high standards while appearing to the outside world to be ultimately serene and controlled. The effect of the personalities of her parents, then, is seen to have wrought self-destructive tendencies upon the inner self of this highly intelligent, highly impressionable young woman.

Another external event that exerts a controlling effect on Katherine's psyche is also revealed through a flashback at the beginning of the narrative. Katherine thinks back to her nineteenth birthday party, which she recognizes as the moment that her brilliant life burned out. It was at this party that Katherine realized that the man whom she loved and had committed herself to had fallen in love with Maeve. Because of her pride and stoic discipline, Katherine appears totally impassive to the soul-shattering experience of losing a second man to Maeve. No one dreams of her jealousy. Everyone thinks she is happy about the match; the couple even thanks her for performing as mastermind of their bliss. From the eve of her nineteenth year Katherine morbidly enjoys the connection between her own life and the life of the Catherine wheel fireworks which also burned so brilliantly and so briefly on that inauspicious night. The nature of the Catherine wheel is to consume itself in a blindingly brief moment of spinning light. It takes its name from St. Catherine, a virgin Christian martyr who was tortured upon a spinning wheel by pagan infidels for her determined adherence to her honor and Christian scruples.

To further emphasize that Katherine has burned out emotionally as a result of this experience, Stafford has her protagonist fall victim to typhoid fever shortly after the party. Katherine welcomes the illness, which turns her hair white over night, as a "miraculous compensation, a gift of Providence" for it gives her a socially acceptable cover behind which to more deeply and securely bury her emotions. She literally jumps from an adolescent to a matron, skipping the intervening adult commitment. Although she masks her pain and appears to continue undaunted, joining the newlyweds on their honeymoon jaunts and gaily flirting with numerous swains, her ability to commit to an adult relationship or even a young adult life style is forever burned out. From her nineteenth birthday on, she creates an existence for herself of ordered routine in a world peopled only by the elderly and by children. She shuns the places and activities frequented by her peers and resigns herself to a life that has stopped in time. She refuses to get a car and continues to drive her horse-drawn carriage (Pegasus is one of her horses). Thus this second and even more debilitating blow from the outside wreaks permanent damage on this susceptible soul.

In the middle of the narrative the middle-aged protagonist is eminently respected, actually revered by her community. No one guesses that her insomnia and ever more frequent fainting spells are symptoms of the nearly all-consuming struggle between her honor and her desire to release her repressed passion. Even though she is aware that her fainting spells are not normal, she refuses to seek psychiatric help or any other avenue available to an adult who assumes responsibility for his own mental health. When her old boyfriends reenter her life, she despises the ravages that the concerns of adult responsibility and the business world have inflicted upon their personalities. They, on the other hand, see in her the same young woman they once flirted with and are painfully reminded of their lost youth. She who has never compromised her ideals for mate or children, she who has remained a dilettante brightly dabbling in social work and science, she who effortlessly and gaily supervises a household that is the essence of good taste and individuality, sparkles brilliantly next to their careworn, preoccupied wives, replete with complaints and demands. To her ex-boyfriends Katherine promises a love that could right the sinking ships of their dulled and troubled lives. This recognition is the revenge for which Katherine has existed. As each swain has fallen to Maeve or one of her counterparts, Katherine, in her jealousy has planned this moment of vengeance, but the savor quickly sours as her scruples and honor still prevent her from stealing them away from their wives and families. In truth, her standards have become so idealized over the years that the men's imperfections are abrasively harsh and unattractive to her. Their loss of youthful naivete and sense of carefree adventure renders them unalluring to her for they have been damaged and dampened in their struggles with the realities of adulthood, while she has arranged to be forever youthful—she has never risked love or the vagaries of fate since that fateful evening twenty years ago. Now in total control, she meets their advances with cold disdain. She relives the bitter pain of their former rejections, equating them with her father's.

Katherine cannot understand, even in middle age, what it is that is lacking in her. These men, at first attracted to her, have ultimately all loved Maeve or another woman equally Katherine's inferior in assertiveness, wealth, intelligence, and beauty. She is wise enough to realize that even now it is not she that they love, but only the lost youth that they try to recapture through her. She blames Maeve for forcing her to compete for their attention. She realizes that she has won all the points, but cannot grasp why she hasn't won the men.

At the end of this section of the novel, watching her twin nieces, Honor and Harriet, prepare for the ball, she sees that their only depth is their talent for happiness, a quality sorely lacking in her. She is so terrified by her understanding of what is involved in a real commitment to an adult other and to adult life that she is incapable of the ingenuous silliness of the twins which prevents them, as it did their mother before them, from seeing the long-view, the consequences of their silly flirtations. She sees that they are running headlong into marriages that will tarnish their youthful sparkle within a few years. Katherine begins to recognize also that the gallants for whom the girls dress and preen are also like the fireworks that they all anticipate as the grand finale of the ball's entertainment, for they too will soon burn out and become dull just like her old lovers, and like the boys in the past, they too are only capable of loving a woman insofar as she can reflect their own greatness and be a stimulant to it. Pondering the futures of the young people, she cries out, "Progress, change, stereotypes, dilution: their minds, what will become of their minds?" She is blind to the fact that her own dilettantism is not truly exercising her mind either. Her mind is still locked in place, reliving past trips to Europe and early flirtations, but underlying all is her preoccupation with her perceived rejections, her jealousy, her guilt, and her consuming thirst for vengeance. Despite this inability to confront these matters directly and rechannel her energies positively, she does have a tenacious strand of introspection which gradually forces upon her the realization of the hideous game that she has been playing with herself. It is this nagging glimpse of the truth, not fully understood and energetically suppressed, which causes her to swoon when it forces past her defenses. The only plan that Katherine has formulated for her life has been to somehow supplant Maeve. The only escape that she can devise from the ever-encroaching chaos and the deafening cry of guilt is to run away to an island with the man whom she lost on her nineteenth birthday, Maeve's husband. John loves her and would go if she demanded it, but the closer she gets to realizing this adolescent fantasy, the more impossible it becomes, for the voice of honor and dignity cries out more and more loudly in her brain.

The climax toward which all the events and emotions of the narrative build is the ball that Katherine plans to mirror the ball of her nineteenth birthday party over twenty years ago. "The finale of the ball was to be five Catherine wheels, set in the clearing, four of them revolving simultaneously and the fifth coming a little later as the premiere danseuse." The fifth Catherine wheel, a dud, misfires and ignites the hair of one of the guests. Katherine, in smothering the flames, is also set on fire by her own Catherine wheel.

At the conclusion Katherine lies in pain on her deathbed. Her final words spoken to her nephew, John's and Maeve's son, with whom she shares an almost mystic bond, are, "He was not worth it." Only at death's door, then, is she able to confront the truth: she has devoted her life to an ideal that was not worth it. Katherine goes to her death believing herself to have lived completely unloved. Her unrealistic world view combined with her inflexible nature has rendered her incapable of making the compromises necessary to leading a normal life. Only in death can she face the truth, and only in death can she escape her torturing conflict.

Jean Stafford's Katherine Congreve is a fully rounded character who ranks with the best of those who fight to bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood. She is presented with so convincing a congeries of personality traits and is drawn to reveal so many of the secret fears, jealousies, guilts and loves of adolescence that even though she is unable to pull the threads of her life together successfully, as does Jane Eyre, or even partially as does Holden Caulfield, she nonetheless exposes the traps behind the fantasies and irresponsibilities of adolescence, and through her agonizing struggle and cataclysmic failure teaches the routes to avoid. So much of what Katherine does is admirable and positive, as seen by the respect she earns from her community, but outward appearances do not alone comprise success. Katherine never learns to be true to herself. In emulating her father inflexibly she denies an important side of her own nature which refuses to be nullified. In her assiduous efforts to blame others for wrongs in her life, she blinds herself to more productive methods. Her inability to adapt to change and to risk untried avenues results in suffering far worse than any consequences of risk taking, and at the same time her refusal to extend and broaden herself cuts her off from the soul-satisfying success which generates its own power and courage.

The Catherine Wheel is a skillfully crafted and complex novel. It includes a subplot in which Katherine's thirteen-year-old nephew, Andrew, deals with his own inability to adjust successfully to his social environment in a manner that parallels Katherine's. The length limitation of this publication precludes my delving into these parallels here, but an analysis of Andrew can also be successfully employed to unlock the complex concepts in this modern psychological fiction.

Jean Stafford's deft characterization of Katherine battling isolation and alienation in her imprisoned world makes *The Catherine Wheel* an eminently useful device for teaching literary analysis through characterization in the high school classroom. Because the devices of flashback and foreshadowing reconstruct the past and prepare for the climax very logically and with intensifying emotion, the protagonist's struggle for self-understanding can be systematically reconstructed into a beginning, middle, and end sequence. Because the moral and psychological dynamics of her characters are heightened and clarified by exterior events and symbolic details, a careful analysis is rewarded with insights that hook students and lure them into a deeper enjoyment of literature and life.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS WIN NCTE WRITING AWARDS

Four classroom teachers have received the fourth annual ENGLISH JOURNAL Writing Awards for quality writing by classroom teachers. The teachers and their articles are as follows:

First place: Kay Jacob, Valley View School District, Illinois, for "Brave New English Curriculum" (EJ, Jan. 1982).

First place among junior high/middle school teachers: Christy Hammer, Mickle Junior High School, Lincoln, Nebraska, for "Practical Piaget in the Classroom," (EJ, Nov. 1981).

Honorable mentions: Richard Calisch, Elk Grove High School, Illinois, for "Dante and Oedipus Go to Atlanta, Georgia" (EJ, Nov. 1982), and Susan Mansfield Skean, Fords, New Jersey, for "The Pamphlet: a Successful Writing Project" (EJ, Feb. 1982).

CLASSIC SALABILITY

John C. Holcomb

One of the prime difficulties with teaching classical literature is not only in gaining the students' attention but in being able to maintain and hold that attention throughout the entire text.

In just capturing that attention you're faced with the monumental task of competition; competition with other media which are multi-dimensional as well as effortless. Being armed with usually a one-dimensional anachronism, you're asked to magnetize it to an unmotivated being with a strikingly limited vocabulary. So, how to do it?

Analogies have proven to be an avenue of attraction in dealing with these seemingly one-dimensional classics in a three-dimensional world. Yet not just any comparison will do. You need to be quite discerning about the selection of a classic's mate. This breeding must entail the use of "good stock" whose backgrounds have been thoroughly gleaned. The product of this process can awaken students into at least probing areas which they themselves have formerly closed off.

The classic that I have found best suited to this type of comparative development is Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. In order to make such a literary undertaking palpable, George Lucas was kind enough to provide both the "classic" movie and the book, Star Wars. Because Star Wars was such a phenomenon, the foundation for the selling of Ivanhoe was partially laid out for me. Also, considering that Star Wars, the movie, has been characterized as a "classic", you're killing two birds with one stone in that you're dealing with two classical media, one from the past and one from the immediate present.

In comparing these two "classics" I've found it easier to approach Star Wars first, followed by Ivanhoe, the obvious reason being that it is a much faster paced work with little attention given to detail. This is also an excellent point of contrast in trying to promote an appreciation for the amount of effort required not only in the first draft but also for the many revisions that Scott went about. The story line is much easier to present and follow, especially when not "bogged down" by an overabundance of description. With the plot of Star Wars in hand, I then present the analogies with Ivanhoe. By reiterating the preconceived notions of similarity between the two books, I am pre-programming a clearer understanding of not only the story line but the character alignment as well.

In developing these analogies I begin with the general and move to the specific. That is to say that the novel's basic plot line will first be looked at as the basic unit of structural comparison, and then a match up of individual characters discovered and developed.

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The basic building block for both of these classics stems from the chivalric code of the past, transformed into the "Force" of a "another galaxy, another time." This vital link runs through the veins of each novel; this is the governing code of conduct followed by the knights of both causes. The novels seem to follow Chaucer's concept of what constitutes knighthood, "chivalrye, trouthe, honour, fredom and courteisye." In both instances the knights, be they of the Medieval or Jedi variety, are expected, rather than desired, to uphold the practice of respect toward women, truth, honor, and courage. This "force" is to become a total part of a Jedi being, much as "chivalry" became the reason behind existing knights of the Middle Ages. With some expectation of using the hero as a pawn, this code is often used as an impetus to gaining an end. For instance, just as Rebecca calls upon Ivanhoe as her champion, Princess Leia likewise manipulates Hans Solo into support of the Old Republic's cause.

From not only, in the largest sense, the theme of good triumphing over evil, similarities exist down into even the small details of weapons. In each instance the individual's armament is identified, by a sword or a laser powered light saber, used in the same fashion when dueling. It is no anomoly for the Jedi, but is the sole physical symbol of "the force," whose use is only perfected after much tutelage. Likewise the medieval knight's sword was presented at the culmination of his training and represented the standard for which he was to bear allegiance.

In both classics the characters remain constant and seem static. That is to say they don't develop or change, and each maintains the same posture throughout the entire plot. Likewise, the manuscripts are constructed around the exploits of one main male character.

Ivanhoe and Luke Skywalker have been disinherited by their parents or guardians. Soon after this separation they go under the tutelage of a famous sage. Instilled with this edification, they soon become involved in a great struggle: Ivanhoe goes off to the Crusades; Luke becomes a member of the Old Republic opposing the New Order. Each hero is also involved in a romantic interlude, and in both cases the objects of their desires seem to be beyond their grasp. Rowena, a descendent of Saxon royalty and authority, is being maneuvered toward Athelstane. Likewise, Leia Organa, the daughter of a senator, shows signs of being attracted to Hans Solo. It goes without saying that, like all heroes, they possess an abundance of courage, stamina, and fortitude, as well as natural warrior skills. These same warrior skills are tuned under the direction and guidance of their respective mentors.

The task of preparing the two heroes is administered by well-qualified individuals whose teaching methods range from example to rote practice; in either case, it boils down to an "all or nothing" principle. Yet their mentors' temperament for teaching is vastly different. Unlike King Richard, Obe Wan Kenobi, seems to show a continued even temperament and refrains from jumping to conclusions while always composing his judgments. Possibly this is because Ben Kenobe is somewhat of a wizard and far less human than Richard the Lionhearted. Neither shows a trace of arrogance as do their opponents, Prince John and Darth Vader, and both seem to deal with their enemies from a position that eliminates fear.

No allegory would be complete without dealing with the supreme antagonist of each novel. Brian de Bois-Guilbert is representative of the military "arm" of the church. He appears as arrogant, stern, and reliant upon strict military discipline to maintain his superiority. Remembering that he is a Templar, a special order of knights aligned with the church, his broken vows of the code of chivalry are even more glaring. Much in the same fashion that Scott treats the Catholic church does Lucas treat "the

Force." Darth Vadar's renunciation and later his personal use of what he has been taught for his own gratification, parallel many of the acts by Bois-Guilbert, who continues to "bend" his vows to suit his own needs.

Both the haughty Templar and the ominous Lord of the Sith pose striking examples of unprincipled figures. Each uses subjugation of one people (Vader's soldier as well as the Templar's Saracen slaves) in seeking to advance his own cause. Yet the most prominent parallel arises from their original inception as soldiers and members of an order heralded by the tenets of goodness: the Knights Templar and the Jedi Knights.

Oddly enough each novel possesses a partner for the hero. Not a typical "sidekick", he is seen as an equal. Alas, the equal's only downfall is that he is a fugitive from justice; this is somewhat redeemed by his skill and fearlessness in battle. Both Hans Solo and Locksley possess a rollicking, devil-may-care attitude toward authority, and essentially they represent a defiance of law and order, eventually assisting in its overthrow.

Although similar, there do seem to be disparaging differences in the goals of the two brigands. The legendary figure, Robin Hood, allegedly robbed the rich to give to the poor, while Hans Solo is concerned only with improving his own financial status; also, each possesses a physically large, corpulent associate. Even though Locksley has a number of followers, Friar Tuck (the clerk of Companhurst) is his closest ally, as is Chewabacca to Hans Solo.

Possibly some of the closest character comparisons can be made among the "minor" figures. After the scenic description of the "extensive wood" of merry England and the "exquisitely hot" climate of Tatooine, we are introduced to a dynamic duo who stay paired throughout the entire book. Both of these mates are essential prime movers although not considered as main characters. They are so elemental as to be the impetus behind most of the action in both stories. In each case one appears to be superior in nature to the other. Wamba, because of his clothing and apparent closeness to Cedric, seems to transcend his lowly swine-herder companion, Gurth. Yet they are in fact equal as simple serfs who only exist for the will of their master. In the same light Artoo Detoo seems to play the flunkey because of his lack of vocal communication and stubby size, while Threepio, because of his humanoid appearance, mannerisms, and aggressive superiority, appears to be the sovereign to his underling friend. Yet he too is no more than his friend's equal.

Inseparable in their bonds of friendship, these classic pairs more than once "go to bat" for their comrade to thwart the wrath of their master because of their rebellious spirit or programming. Gurth slips his bonds and escapes into the woods from Cedric; likewise Artoo renounces his servitude to Luke's family and wanders off in search of Ben Kenobi. In both pieces of literature these seemingly minor characters are revolving points for action, dialogue, disguise and plot development.

One point of incongruity in character parallels is seen when comparing heroines. Ivanhoe is set with two memorable females, while Star Wars has only one. Yet it seems that characteristics have been gleaned from both Rowena and Rebecca in the creation of Leia Organa. The fair haired, blue-eyed, and strong-willed Rowena is a typical chivalric heroine. Like her counterpart Leia, she can also be somewhat haughty. Yet, Leia, much like Rebecca, is totally loyal to her cause, her religion, and her father. Thus it seems that Leia is a hybrid variety.

In applying these analogies I have been dealing with the basic problem of trying to "sell" students on the enjoyment of classics. To this end no two set pairs of books, used in a comparison, are going to be a panacea. My point is that by careful selection, drawing parallels can be useful and stimulating for both the student and the instructor.

DEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIR:

Might your students be interested in a newsletter we're trying out for writers (and teachers of writing) in the western states? If you think they might be, I'd really appreciate your passing the word.

The newsletter is called WRITER'S UPDATE, and we hope that it will give writers a chance to network, to exchange tips and resources, and to share dates of meetings and conferences. The newsletter will also spotlight the teaching of writing, and provide teachers with a means for sharing ideas that have worked for them at the high school, college, and university levels. As you know, most writing resources originate on the East Coast, so we writers and teachers of writing sometimes feel very isolated out here!

Your students or the teachers in your department may request a sample copy from me at the address below. We'd really appreciate your mentioning the newsletter to your journalism department or other interested departments too.

Thanks for your help and support.

Kim Edwards, WRITER'S UPDATE
4812 Folsom Blvd., #250
Sacramento, CA 95819

USING GROUP DYNAMICS IN THE CLASSROOM

Pam Miller

Creating and maintaining enthusiasm in students for literature of the past has been for me one of the biggest challenges in teaching. It seems that few of my eleventh graders automatically share my passion for studying "old dead guys". Their idea of dusty, boring material often includes anything outside their immediate experience, but I find it especially difficult to keep their interest when I approach Anglo-Saxon and Medieval literature. One of the most effective ways to help students become involved in the subject is to assign group tasks in which the students research many areas of a past culture, thereby making the age seem more real. I have done this for the past several years, and although I believe it is a good idea, sometimes the results have been less than satisfactory. Last year, however, armed with guidelines in Group Dynamics from a summer school class at Arizona State University, I began to prepare my students for group work.

The course centered around the use of groups as a way to improve student interest by allowing the class to rely on themselves for motivation and direction, and by having them use me mainly as a resource. The professor, Dr. Sue Cummings, gave us a wealth of ideas about how to get groups to function effectively. By incorporating some of these ideas, along with suggestions found in a book called Developing Effective Classroom Groups by Gene Stanfford, I found that I could use groups in the classroom and achieve terrific results.

At the beginning of the year I insisted that all students have some contact with their fellow classmates. I tried to make this fun and ease the tension by devoting the first two weeks of class to exercises that required each student to work with a different group of people almost every day. These included such activities as personal interviews, puzzle solving, and brain teasers, in which they had to depend on each other to succeed. I also gave class assignments in which the entire class was to function as one group. They were to solve a mystery by organizing the clues that were given to each individual in the group. This exercise forced the students to use leaders, to use sub-groups, and to relate their information in an organized way to the rest of the class. It also made it crucial for every class member to make some contribution. The students learned, sometimes painfully, that large groups are more difficult to control than small ones.

During these two weeks the students were also given ways to function as effective group members. These included listening skills, encouraging other members to participate by maintaining eye contact and using body language, keeping the group on a certain task, breaking a large assignment into manageable segments, and discussion skills. In other words, the students learned that to have and maintain an effective group, they must view themselves as important contributing members of the group, and be prepared to accept several roles in it. Perhaps most important, the students became aware of the need for motivation of all group members. Low-key

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competition between groups was sometimes a factor in their motivation, but as the students became better acquainted, many of them wanted to do a good job so the other members of the group would benefit.

One specific activity that lets group members examine the fundamentals of group behavior involves the use of tinker toys. Each group is given a box of the blocks and then asked to build a tower in ten minutes. No other instructions are given. At the end of the time limit, questions such as "Whose ideas were followed?" "Did a leader emerge?" and "Did all members participate?" are discussed.

Although this preliminary work took up two weeks of class, the resulting groups were a great time saver. However, the real advantage was that while working as a group, the students were able to direct themselves with less dependence on me. By taking the time to develop group skills, I was able to observe the students take greater responsibility for their own actions and use class time more effectively. An example to illustrate this is a project that I gave the class soon after their "training."

Groups are assigned to study different facets of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval life. Of course, this is an adaptable assignment and can be used in almost any setting in which the students are studying an unfamiliar time period. Melville's Moby Dick, for example, would lend itself to a study of the 19th century and the whaling industry, along with historical information on post-colonial life. In the same way the study of Macbeth can be enhanced if the class is asked to do group research into the life style of Elizabethan England. After studying their subjects, the groups are to give a short presentation to the class, thereby filling in the entire class with as much information about the life style of the period in as short a time as possible. The topic headings for the Anglo-Saxon period include such things as Anglo-Saxon and medieval weapons, clothing, food, entertainment, and architecture. The students prepare a written report as well as an oral presentation on their topic. I also require some tangible display to go along with the presentation. I have found that the more visual the projects are, the better understanding the students have of the period.

In past years I have given this assignment, and there has been a wide variety in the quality of the presentations. There have also been personality problems among group members that I have had to deal with. For example, in the past some students have resisted working with another class member who was not part of their clique. I would often hear comments such as "I don't want a stupid jock in my group." or "Cowboys can't even read, let alone do research." Other problems often developed when the project was well underway and a dispute over leadership would arise. This year, however, the students felt comfortable with each other because of their preparation for group study. They were familiar with motivation techniques, they had learned effective ways to organize, and they knew how to be productive group members. The amount of direction they needed from me was minimal. They used me for resource information and for clarification of the material, but every group was self-governing and solved its conflicts on its own.

The students lost some of their inhibitions around one another because they had been thrown together so often in previous exercises. Some groups met at one another's homes to prepare their projects. The quality of visual aids was superior to anything created in previous years. One group treated the class to a medieval feast, and another group came to school dressed in homemade armour. The posters from many of the groups now adorn the walls of my classroom.

The benefits of this group training more than compensated for the time spent at the beginning of the year. It helped make assignments requiring group effort more successful than in previous years, and also encouraged a feeling of camaraderie among all of us in the class. Another positive effect of the experience was that it allowed even shy students to take an active part in the direction of the class by allowing them to develop security in the group setting and gradually increase their roles as group members. The project also made it easier for new students to feel a part of the group. Finally, many students have mentioned that they made more friends in this class than in previous classes.

I think that the success of a class can be measured in part by the memories both teacher and student have when they leave the class. If those memories can include some positive shared experiences, then the chances that the student will remember some of the content of the class are increased. As long as I can achieve results such as the ones from this class project, I plan to use group dynamics in the classroom as an ongoing experience throughout the school year.

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December 1982

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A free 12-page catalog bringing together over 100 titles by and about William Shakespeare has just been published by The Writing Company; copies of the Shakespeare Catalog can be obtained free by writing to The Writing Company, 10,000 Culver Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230. Telephone requests may be made by calling toll-free at (800) 421-4246; in California call collect at (213) 839-2436.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE 7TH GRADE? IT WORKS.

Marilyn J. Schoon

Upon discovering that my 7th grade English students not only study Shakespeare but also read The Merchant of Venice during the last quarter of the school year, my colleagues' comments vary, but these are typical:

> "Shakespeare in the 7th grade? You've gotta be kidding."
>
> "I didn't understand Shakespeare in college. How can you expect 7th graders to get anything from it?"
>
> "How can they read Shakespeare when they can't even write a complete sentence?"

Even after a decade of hearing these and similar comments, I continue to end the school year with this unit. Not only can my 7th graders read Shakespeare with a certain degree of understanding, but--more importantly—they enjoy doing so.

The actual format of my Shakespeare unit varies from class to class, depending on the students' individual and collective interests and abilities. It also varies from year to year as I add new activities and drop others. However, the unit basically entails two equally-important segments: background research on Shakespeare and his historical time with corresponding oral and written work, followed by the actual reading of The Merchant of Venice while listening to a professional recording of the play. Follow-up activities depend on the remaining time before the school year ends.

On the day the unit begins, usually at the start of the class period, I tell the students that we are going to be spending the next four to six weeks studying Shakespeare. This, of course, is met with the obligatory moans and groans which in intermediate school accompany the announcement of any new unit of study. After the students calm down, I ask them to spend the following ten to fifteen minutes freewriting about the new unit: what their initial reactions and feelings are; what they expect, dread, look forward to; what they already know about Shakespeare; what, if anything, they have seen or read by him; and/or anything else that comes to their minds. I then collect the freewritings, not only for my own reading (which I try to do right away), but also to save for each student to compare with a similar freewriting done at the end of the unit.

During the remainder of the class period, I give the students what usually ends up as an introductory speech/pep talk. I explain that reading The Merchant of Venice will be just one part of the whole unit. The research and sharing of information they will do before reading the play will not be just a preliminary step to the reading, but a substantial part of the unit. Because of the past success I've had with Shakespeare and 7th graders, I get pretty excited about what we're going to be doing. Conveying my

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own respect and enthusiasm for Shakespeare, as well as emphasizing that their main goal will be to enjoy the material, usually ensures a positive beginning from which to proceed.

On the second day of the unit, students entering the classroom find the blackboard and empty wall space covered with 'topic cards," 8 1/2 x 11" sheets of paper on which I have written in large letters and dark magic marker possible research topics. The purpose of the research on Shakespeare and his historical time is to give the students a sense of perspective into which they can place the author and his literary works. I compile the topics ahead of time by considering several factors: the various interests and needs of the students, the resources available in our school library, and topics which would enhance the class's understanding of Shakespeare and The Merchant of Venice. Past topics have included the Globe Theatre, the bubonic plague, alchemy, astrology, Queen Elizabeth, the state (of science, medicine, education, theatre, sports, etc.) in Shakespeare's time, fashions, food, music and musical instruments, (England, London, the New World, etc.) in the late 1500's, Jewish customs and/or traditions, controversy over Shakespeare's authorship, the Spanish Armada, and Shakespeare's contemporaries (Cervantes, Galileo, Kepler, Magellan, et al.). The list is limited only by the imaginations of the students and what they are able to do with our resources during the week that we spend in the library doing research. I encourage the students to choose their own topics; but, if pressed, I will assign a student a topic which I think will be of interest.

For doing their actual library research, any source is acceptable. I do try to push them, though, beyond the encyclopedias. The school librarian and I set aside in advance a reserve cart of books which we think might be helpful, and many students bring other books from home or from the public library. In the Washington area, some students are fortunate enough to have access to human resources—a neighbor who works for the Folger Library, a parent who introduces the child to a Shakespeare professor at a local university—all of whom are invaluable in showing that research does not have to consist only of book-searching.

After researching their topics, the students are then responsible for sharing their findings with the rest of the class. Although they don't produce formal, conventional research papers, the methods of sharing can take on various forms: oral presentations, taped radio broadcasts, a class newspaper, as well as extra-credit activities.

In some classes, the students simply give informal, short, oral presentations to their classmates. I encourage them to use visual aids and to rehearse in advance with a friend, parent, or sibling. Depending on the individual student, I sometimes require the latter rather than encourage it. The only written work students are required to turn in is a one-sentence description (not summary) of what the oral presentation covers and a list of sources used. These one-sentence descriptions help the students focus on exactly what their topics are; they also serve as reminders to me of what topic each student has researched.

Over the years I have seen some memorable oral presentations: a boy preparing for his Bar Mitzvah gave a stirring account of the Jewish plight in England during Shakespeare's time, which certainly affected the way in which the class later viewed the character of Shylock; a girl with severe learning disabilities in writing (before special L.D. programs existed) built an incredible scale model of the Globe Theatre and explained it to the class in detail; a graphic and gory report on the bubonic plague was presented complete with charts, graphs, and enlarged photographs (I was grossed out; the kids loved it.); two students reported on Elizabethan music and then gave a short concert on the lute and recorder.

By the time the students actually begin to read The Merchant of Venice, they have been actively involved with Shakespeare and his time for two to three weeks. In addition to the research and sharing of ideas, their spelling and vocabulary work has also been related to Shakespeare and drama. Their intellectual curiosity has been piqued, and they are beginning to feel some pride in dealing with a literary figure whom most of their peers regard with a mixture of disdain and awe. They have forgotten that their freewritings of a few weeks past reflected this same mixture. (During lunch one day I overheard one of them in the library: "Oh, you're checking out Blubber? I used to read Judy Blume, but I'm starting The Merchant of Venice this week. It's by Shakespeare, you know.")

Rather than asking the students to read the Merchant silently or to volunteer to read it aloud, I have adopted the same method which I used both in my undergraduate and in my graduate Shakespeare courses: reading the play while listening to a recording of it. Hearing the expression and nuances that professional Shakespearean actors and actresses give to the reading facilitates the students' understanding of the play. It also takes the pressure off them, especially those students who are not strong readers. I explain in advance that the language will sound a bit strange to them at first but that they'll gradually get used to it--and they do.

The Folger Shakespeare Library's paperback edition of The Merchant of Venice has been my favorite because of its format. The text of the play is printed on the right-hand pages; notes to the text as well as a brief summary of each scene are on the facing left-hand pages. The recording of the Merchant that I use is the Argo set of six records.

Before we listen to each scene, I read its summary aloud and point out anything else which I think the students should know. Occasionally, I'll stop the record during a scene to be sure that the students have understood a particular point or to ask them what they think is going to happen next. After each scene, we discuss the events that have just occurred, and students are free to ask questions and to comment. Listening to the play usually takes from five to seven class periods, depending on the intensity of the class discussion.

The only homework I assign during the reading of the play is completion of the written journal entries which they start at the end of each class period. Sometimes I'll assign the topic, especially if an interesting point of class discussion hasn't been resolved. Most of the time, though, they write their reactions to what they have just read and heard or anything else related to the play. Anyone who wants to share journal writing at the beginning of the following class period may do so. Otherwise, I'll make spot checks to be sure the assignments are being written and then collect the journals on the students' regularly-assigned collection days.

At the end of each of the five acts, I give a brief quiz which covers the happenings of the past act. Not only does this provide me with some of the grades which I am required to have, but it also lets me know how well the students are following the play and if any areas need additional discussion. While the final test on the play is fairly comprehensive, I precede it with a class review which covers all of the material on the test. I assure the students that they'll do well on the test unless they've been sleeping during class. No one has yet proved me wrong.

Extra-credit and follow-up activities round out the Shakespeare unit. Many intermediate school students respond to challenging extra-credit assignments. I have tried various optional assignments for this unit, and the most successful one--much to my surprise--continues to be the memorization and presentation to the class of various passages from some of Shakespeare's plays. I keep a file of typed soliloquies and dialogues ("All the world's a stage"; "What a piece of work is a man"; Hamlet's "To be or not to be"; Macbeth's "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow"; Portia's "The quality of mercy"; Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene, etc.) which are available to the students, or they can choose their own. These can be presented to the class any time during the unit with one day's advance notice so that I can plan accordingly. All that the student is required to do to receive the extra credit is to introduce the context of the selection to the class and then to present the selection from memory with enough expression to show a basic understanding of the passage. However, most students who choose this activity go all out with costumes, props, and sound effects. They put a great deal of work into their presentations, and I have yet to have a parent complain about the effort or the expense.

The number and types of follow-up activities the students do after reading the Merchant are determined by how much time remains in the quarter. I always find time for a freewriting similar to the one I assign the first day of the unit. The strong contrast between their initial reactions and their later feelings usually surprises them and invariably pleases me.

Another activity groups of students enjoy, which can be used instead of the oral reports at the beginning of the unit or as a follow-up activity, is the writing and taping of radio broadcasts which incorporate the material each member of the group has researched. The broadcast format for each group of four to six students is basically the same: a 10-second sign-on, a 30-second public service announcement, 1 1/2 minutes of news, a 60-second commercial, a 3-minute feature program, and a 10-second sign-off. The content of each broadcast will vary depending on the members' research topics. After completing their research, my students can start immediately on this project, since each class is already familiar with the techniques of writing and taping a radio broadcast from having completed a similar assignment earlier in the year. In fact, the idea for creating a broadcast from the Shakespeare material was initially suggested by students who had enjoyed the earlier project. Waiting until the latter part of the Shakespeare unit to do the radio broadcasts has one additional benefit. The work keeps the students pleasantly and meaningfully occupied during the last week of school, an otherwise chaotic time of the year. The students enjoy listening not only to their own class's tapes but also to tapes from other classes during the last few days of school.

Another class project using the fruits of students' individual research is a Shakespeare newspaper. Since one of our required intermediate school writing assignments is to write a news article, I fulfill this requirement in conjunction with the Shakespeare unit. The students' articles have to tie in somehow with their research. After the final copies or "deadline drafts" are turned in, I have parent volunteers type each class's articles in narrow columns. Then, with a small committee from each class, we spend one day after school doing the layout and paste up. All that is left for me to do is make enough Xerox copies to distribute to the students and to display in my room so that everyone can see what the other classes have written. Knowing that their articles with bylines are going to be published, not only for their own classmates but for other classes as well, seems to be a strong incentive for good writing.

One recent edition, which the class titled England's Enquirer, contained front page articles headlined "Mutiny at Sea--Hudson Left to Perish," "Caesar Slain by Friends," and "King Henry VIII Remarries, Again." Editorials on "The Birth and Future of Modern English," "England's Helper" (Queen Elizabeth), and "The Shakespeare Plays: Who Wrote Them?" were followed by individual obituaries for Hamlet, Susanna, and William Shakespeare, as well as Julius Caesar. This particular newspaper also included reviews of plays, articles on the plague, and, from a student who had researched Elizabethan architecture, a classified advertisement for a home, written in narrative form.

Other popular follow-up activities come from a set of "quote cards" which I made several years ago. Using books of famous quotations, I compiled a list of over 50 quotes from Shakespeare which I felt the students either would be familiar with ("Neither a borrower, nor a lender be") or could easily understand ("Oh. How bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes"). I typed each quote on an index card which I then laminated. This sturdy set of cards has proven invaluable in the following activities:

Impromptu speeches. The quote cards are placed face down in a box on a table which is at the back or to one side of the classroom. As one student goes to the podium to give his/her one- or two-minute impromptu speech, the next student goes to the box, selects two cards, quickly chooses one quote, puts the card not being used back in the box, and uses the remaining time to come up with an idea for an impromptu speech which will use the quote as the opening or closing line or will in some other way relate to the quote. This activity usually works best with a class of bright and articulate students.

Group improvisations. Students get into small groups of 3-5 members. Each group is given 3 or 4 quote cards. After a brief discussion, the group selects one of the quotes around which it will base its improvisation. (After a minute or so, I usually collect the unused cards, which forces them to choose quickly.) The group spends the remainder of the time—5 to 10 minutes—developing a story which is based on the quote. While the students are discussing their quotes and stories, I tell each group in what order it will perform. This enables the class to get the room back in order without a great deal of confusion before the performing begins. Because it involves group discussion and a longer preparation time than the impromptu speeches, this activity usually works well with all classes.

Writing assignments. The number and types of writing assignments which the quote cards can generate are limitless. I have used them for group writing as well as individual writing.

As with the radio broadcast activity which was added a few years ago, I will continue to try new activities with this unit. The possibilities seem to be unlimited.

Of all the Shakespeare plays, why The Merchant of Venice? My usual, glib answer to this question is, "Why not?" However, several reasons led me to choose this particular play to use with intermediate school students. A pragmatic reason is that Merchant, unlike Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Romeo and Juliet, is not a standard Shakespearean selection in the high schools which most of my students will eventually attend. So I run less of a risk of incurring what would be the justified wrath of their high school English teachers were I to infringe upon their literary territory.

I have tried other plays. At one time I taught A Midsummer Night's Dream as well as Merchant. But as the county-required work to be covered increased and as the connotation associated with "fairies" changed, I became less comfortable with A Midsummer Night's Dream and began to build my unit solely around The Merchant of Venice.

The Merchant of Venice has so many elements which appeal to and/or impress the pre- and early-adolescent: Shylock and Antonio's "pound of flesh" bargain; the three caskets from which a suitor must choose to win Portia's hand, and the concept of honor which binds those who choose the wrong one; Jessica's rebellion against her strict father and her subsequent elopement and extravagant spending of her father's money; the disguises used at Antonio's trial; the trial itself; the trickery played on the husbands by their disguised wives at the end of the play. These elements alone could justify the use of Merchant.

But one other factor has made it an invaluable addition to my curriculum. The Merchant of Venice deals with the topic of prejudice more realistically than does most of the literature specifically aimed at the intermediate school student. Unlike many literary victims of prejudice who are portrayed as total innocents facing a terribly unjust world, Shylock is not an innocent person. He has many unlikable if not despicable personal characteristics. The complexity of his character and of his relationships to the other characters in the play has led to many serious and deep class discussions.

Can Shakespeare really be taught successfully in the 7th grade? Obviously, I think it can be, but I would like to let my students speak for themselves.

From freewritings written at the end of the Shakespeare unit:

> "The Merchant of Venice was a great story. The courtroom scene was more suspenseful than most television programs."
>
> "Too bad Portia had to disguise herself to do any good. She was smarter than all the men in the story."
>
> "Shakespeare wasn't at all as bad as I expected."

From an 8th grader the following year:

> "My parents couldn't believe it. During the summer I listened to and read eight Shakespeare plays, one a week. It was a great way to spend rainy days when I couldn't go outside or to the pool. My little sister read with me a few times, and one time the whole family listened. I mostly read comedies, but Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth were my favorites."

From a former student several years after I taught him:

> "When we had to read Julius Caesar in 10th grade, mostly on our own, I checked the record out and listened to it as I read the play—just like we did in 7th grade. That made it so much easier to understand, and my teacher couldn't believe some of the points I was able to bring up in discussion. A lot of kids in the class hated it, but thanks to your 'making' us get to know Shakespeare in the 7th grade, I really enjoyed Julius Caesar. I wasn't afraid of Shakespeare. I just wanted to let you know because I know you must get depressed sometimes when you try to 'enlighten' your students and it doesn't seem to work. Well, it worked on this kid."

As far as I'm concerned, the students have the final word.

THE SCARLET LETTER: A NEW LOOK AT A CLASSIC

Virginia McCormick

From time to time it's a good idea to look at a piece of literature from a different perspective. Recently, the Sunday New York Times[1] carried a story explaining Shakespeare's version of Hamlet's father's death by poisoning in terms of newly found medical evidence. As we gain more knowledge or look at the past in terms of the things we know today, new interpretations of literary classics may emerge.

Such is the case with Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter.[2] In recent years, students have met increasing frustration reading and comprehending The Scarlet Letter. While some students have difficulty comprehending Hawthorne's vocabulary and sentence structures, others cannot fathom why Hester Prynne is ostracized and persecuted by having to wear that ignominious A. Perhaps because today's morality is so different from that of Puritan times, and bed hopping is blatantly depicted on soap operas, prime time television, and the movies, students cannot relate to Hester's plight. Possibly because students don't have an understanding of the past and its morality, they see little reason to struggle to read The Scarlet Letter.

For that reason, a different approach to teaching the novel seems necessary. One answer or approach is to treat the novel as a detective story or even a murder mystery. No matter how unorthodox that sounds, please remember that this is simply a motivational technique. In no way does this interpretation intend to be a definitive analysis of The Scarlet Letter. Instead, teaching The Scarlet Letter as a detective story or murder mystery entices students into reading the novel to see if a crime of passion has been committed, who committed it, why it was committed, and how it was committed. In addition, this focus creates an opportunity for students to employ deductive reasoning skills and support generalizations with specific details. It provides a perfect opportunity for assigning an expository essay.

Before dismissing this somewhat unorthodox thesis, consider the following. The Scarlet Letter has a character who assumes an alias, Hester Prynne's husband, Roger Chillingworth. The Scarlet Letter deals with a crime of passion, adultery, which provides a motive for Chillingworth. Chillingworth seeks revenge. As a man who is cognizant of herbal medicines as a result of living with the Indians, Chillingworth has access to and knowledge of herbs and local vegetation. Consequently, Chillingworth has not only the motive and ability to commit the premeditated murder of Dimmesdale, but as Dimmesdale's physician, counselor, and would-be confidant, Chillingworth also has the opportunity to murder the Reverend Mister Dimmesdale.

As students begin reading the novel, suggest to them that they are detectives in search of clues to prove or disprove that a murder has been attempted, if not committed. They are to look for probable cause or motive, opportunity, crime or crimes (real or imagined), plan of the murderer, how the murder was attempted or carried out, aliases, and any other relevant data.

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Obviously, in the first chapter of the novel, the reader discovers that the setting is a prison. As chapter two begins, the reader discovers that indeed a crime against society has been committed. When Hester Prynne climbs onto the scaffold to be publicly shamed holding the three month old Pearl in her arms, the reader learns that her crime has been adultery, indeed a crime of passion.

At the beginning of chapter three Hester beholds a white man surrounded by Indians. "When he found the eyes of Hester Prynne fastened on his own, and saw that she appeared to recognize him, he slowly and calmly raised his finger, made a gesture with it in the air, and laid it on his lips" (p. 57). Apparently, the air of secrecy exists first in Hester's refusal to acknowledge Pearl's father and secondly, in the request for silence from this newly arrived man.

As the stranger inquires about Hester's plight, he comments that her punishment is a wise sentence. He continues, "It irks me, nevertheless, that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the scaffold by her side. But he will be known. -—he will be known. —he will be known." (p. 59). Why, the detective-reader might ask, should a stranger become so zealous about the identity of the father of the child, the co-adulterer?

In chapter four, the stranger reappears in the guise of a physician. "As night approached, it proving impossible to quell her [Hester's] insubordination by rebuke or threats of punishment, Master Brackett, the jailer, thought fit to introduce a physician. He described him as a man of skill in all Christian modes of physical science, and likewise familiar with whatever the savage people could teach, in respect to medicinal herbs and roots that grew in the forest" (p. 65). The physician, therefore, is not a physician at all. Rather, he is a man who has learned the medicinal properties of herbs and roots from his Indian captors. The jailer announces the physician as Roger Chillingworth (an alias). The reader sees Chillingworth as quite an actor, for he is adept at dissembling, as the following passage illustrates.

> The stranger had entered the room with the characteristic quietude of the profession to which he announced himself as belonging. Nor did his demeanor change, when the withdrawal of the prison keeper left him face to face with the woman, whose absorbed notice of him, in the crowd, had intimated so close a relation between himself and her. (p. 66)

Chillingworth confides his deception to Hester. "'My old studies in alchemy,' observed he, 'and my sojourn, for above a year past, among a people well versed in the kindly properties of simples, have made a better physician of me than many that claim the medical degree'" (p. 67). As Chillingworth offers the medicine, "Hester repelled the offered medicine, at the same time gazing with strongly marked apprehension into his face," and says, "'Wouldst thou avenge thyself on the innocent babe?'" (p. 67). To which Chillingworth replies that he would not harm the child. He then proceeds to mix a sleep-inducing potion for Hester. "'I know not Lethe nor Nepenthe,' remarked he; 'but I have learned many new secrets in the wilderness, and here is one of them,--a recipe that an Indian taught me. . .'" (p. 68). The passage continues, "he presented the cup to Hester, who received it with a slow, earnest look into his face; not precisely a look of fear, yet full of doubt and questioning, as to what his purposes might be" (p. 68). At this point, Hester looking at the baby responds, "'I have thought of death,' said she,—'have wished for it,—would even have prayed for it, were it fit that such as I should pray for anything. Yet, if death be in this cup, I bid thee think again, ere thou beholdest me quaff it" (p. 68). Even Hester, who risks death as a consequence of her adultery, is skeptical about Chillingworth's motives as he supposedly tries to help calm her and her child. Yet is Chillingworth without motive in giving Hester the sleeping potion? Perhaps he hopes Hester will utter the name of her beloved in her sleep. What does Chillingworth have in mind?

Shortly, this question is answered. Soon after Hester drinks the sedative, Chillingworth begins his interrogation. Despite her drowsy state, Hester refuses to reveal the identity of Pearl's father. Even though Chillingworth implores Hester to reveal the identity of the man who has wronged them both, Hester maintains her secret and says, "'Ask me not.' 'That thou shalt never know.'" (p. 70). It is in the face of this declaration that Chillingworth replies

> "Never, sayest thou?" rejoined he, with a smile of dark and self-relying intelligence. "Never know him. Believe me, Hester, there are few things,--whether in the outward world, or, to a certain depth, in the invisible sphere of thought,—few things hidden from the man who devotes himself earnestly and unreservedly to the solution of a mystery." " . . . I come to the inquest with other senses than they [other men] possess. I shall seek this man, as I have sought truth in books; as I have sought gold in alchemy. There is a sympathy that will make me conscious of him. I shall see him tremble. . . . Sooner or later, he must needs be mine." (p. 70)

He then adds

> "He bears no letter of infamy wrought into his garment, as thou dost; but I shall read it on his heart. Yet fear not for him. Think not that I shall interfere with Heaven's own method of retribution, or to my own loss, betray him to the gripe of human law." (p. 70)

Although Chillingworth says that he will not interfere with Heaven's method of retribution, he does not say that he won't aid Heaven in seeking that retribution, and the reader must recall that only a few lines earlier Chillingworth has proclaimed that the man will be his. Chillingworth now requests Hester to keep his identity a secret as well.

In chapter nine, titled, "The Leech," Hawthorne discusses Chillingworth and reminds the reader that the name of Chillingworth is an alias. In his description of Chillingworth, Hawthorne says

> As his studies, at a previous period of his life, had made him extensively acquainted with the medical science of the day, it was as a physician that he presented himself. . . . Skillful men, of the medical and chirurgical profession, were of rare occurrence in the colony. . . . . . . Roger Chillingworth was a brilliant acquisition. He soon manifested his familiarity with the ponderous and imposing machinery of antique physic; in which every remedy contained a multitude of far-fetched and heterogeneous ingredients, as elaborately compounded as if the proposed result had been the Elixir of Life. In his Indian captivity, moreover, he had gained much knowledge of the properties of native herbs and roots; nor did he conceal from his

> patients, that these simple medicines, Nature's boon to the untutored savage, had quite as large a share of his own confidence as the European pharmacopoeia, which so many learned doctors had spent centuries in elaborating. (pp. 109-110)

Thus Chillingworth inspires the trust and confidence of the townspeople. Hawthorne continues to note that "This learned stranger was exemplary, as regarded, at least, the outward forms of a religious life, and, early after his arrival, had chosen for his spiritual guide the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale" (p. 110). Only two sentences later, Hawthorne writes, "About this period, however, the health of Mr. Dimmesdale had evidently begun to fail" (p. 110). Certainly, a connection has been implied between the onset of Mr. Dimmesdale's declining health and his association with Roger Chillingworth. The reader must determine if, in fact, a cause-effect relationship exists between the minister's failing health, his association with Chillingworth, and Chillingworth's prescriptions and herbal medicines. Does Chillingworth, in fact, plan to murder Dimmesdale? If so, how does he plan to do it? Or, does he instead plan to weaken Dimmesdale, rendering him useless to parishioners and discrediting him? Or does Chillingworth simply plan to slowly, cautiously poison this man of God so that in his agitated condition, the minister's "medicines" are undetected as poisons?

Hawthorne alludes again to Dimmesdale's paleness and possible heart problems and follows that with another description of Chillingworth's medical qualifications.

> He [Chillingworth] was now known to be a man of skill; it was observed that he gathered herbs, and the blossoms of wild-flowers, and dug up roots, and plucked off twigs from the forest-trees, like one acquainted with hidden virtues in what was valueless to common eyes. . . . (p. 111)

If the reader views the story as a mystery, perhaps a murder myster, then s/he can see the irony in Hawthorne's statement

> Individuals of wiser faith, indeed, who know that Heaven promotes its purposes without aiming at the stage effect of what is called miraculous interposition, were inclined to see a providential hand in Roger Chillingworth's so opportune arrival. (p. 111)

Obviously, Chillingworth courts the community's veneration of his skill, and in fact, as previously mentioned, encourages the townspeople to trust him. Without realizing it, the townspeople possibly endanger their beloved minister's life by urging Chillingworth's treatment of the man. Chillingworth shows concern for the minister as Hawthorne indicates in the following passage.

> This idea was countenanced by the strong interest which the physician ever manifested in the young clergyman; he attached himself to him as a parishioner, and sought to win a friendly regard and confidence from his naturally reserved sensibility. He expressed great alarm at his pastor's state of health, but was anxious to attempt the cure. . . . (p. 111)

In addition, Hawthorne continues,

> As not only the disease interested the physician, but he was strongly moved to look into the character and qualities of the patient, these two men, so different in age, came gradually to spend much time together. (p. 113)

So intent is Chillingworth on gaining the minister's confidence that he

> . . . strove to go deep into his patient's bosom, delving among his principles, prying into his recollections, and probing everything with a cautious touch, like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern. Few secrets can escape an investigator, who has opportunity and license to undertake such a quest, and skill to follow it up. (p. 114)

As if that weren't enough,

> After a time, at a hint from Roger Chillingworth, the friends of Mr. Dimmesdale effected an arrangement by which the two were lodged in the same house; so that every ebb and flow of the minister's life-tide might pass under the eye of his anxious and attached physician. (p. 115)

Thus the townspeople, in attempting to do a good deed for their ailing minister, may have added to his jeopardy.

Next Hawthorne describes the laboratory Chillingworth sets up, and describes the uncertainty with which a segment of the population regards Chillingworth. There are several references to the black arts in connection with the physician and only a page later, Hawthorne intimates a connection between the physician and Sir Thomas Overbury's physician, who was suspected of murdering or at least of contributing to Overbury's death.

> But—it must now be said—another portion of the community had latterly begun to take its own view of the relation betwixt Mr. Dimmesdale and the mysterious old physician. When an uninstructed multitude attempts to see with its eyes, it is exceedingly apt to be deceived. When, however, it forms its judgment, as it usually does, on the intuitions of its great and warm heart, the conclusions thus attained are often so profound and so unerring, as to possess the character of truths supernaturally revealed. The people, in the case of which we speak, could justify its prejudice against Roger Chillingworth by no fact or argument worthy of serious refutation. There was an aged handicraftsman, it is true, who had been a citizen of London at the period of Sir Thomas Overbury's murder, now some thirty years agone; he testified to having seen the physician, under some other name, which the narrator of the story had now forgotten, in company with Doctor Forman, the famous old conjurer, who was implicated in the affair of Overbury. Two or three individuals hinted, that the man of skill, during his Indian captivity, had enlarged his medical attainments by joining in the incantations of the savage priests; who were universally acknowledged to be powerful enchanters, often performing seemingly miraculous cures by their skill in

> the black art. A large number—and many of these were persons of such sober sense and practical observation that their opinions would have been valuable in other matters—affirmed that Roger Chillingworth's aspect had undergone a remarkable change while he had dwelt in town, and especially since his abode with Mr. Dimmesdale. At first his expression had been calm, meditative, scholarlike. Now, there was something ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight the oftener they looked upon him. (pp. 116-117)

Obviously, to some, Chillingworth's actions have become suspect. Only Chillingworth himself knows what evil lurks in his heart, but the reader may now suspect along with some of the townspeople, that Roger Chillingworth plans to endanger the fated minister's life. But how does he plan to do the minister in?

Hawthorne says, "The intellect of Roger Chillingworth had now sufficiently plain path before it." He continues, writing, "The clergyman's shy and sensitive reserve had balked this scheme [Chillingworth's attempt to gain the truth about Dimmesdale and Hester]. Roger Chillingworth, however, was inclined to be hardly, if at all [sic] less satisfied with the aspect of affairs, which Providence—using the avenger and his victim for its own purposes, and, perchance, pardoning where it seemed most to punish—had substituted for his black devices" (p. 128).

As the minister's doctor, Chillingworth "could play upon him as he chose. Would he arouse him with a throb of agony? . . . As at the waving of a magician's wand, up rose a grisly phantom,—uprose a thousand phantoms,—in many shapes, of death, or more awful shame, all flocking round about the clergyman, and pointing with their fingers at his breast." (p. 129) This passage suggests to the reader that perhaps Chillingworth has administered some kind of sleep-inducing or hallucinatory herb to the fitful minister.

According to a passage a little later in the text, the reader discovers that Chillingworth was indeed acquainted with such drugs. During a walk with Hester and Pearl, Hester watches Chillingworth pick herbs.

> She wondered what sort of herbs they were, which the old man was so sedulous to gather. Would not the earth, quickened to an evil purpose by the sympathy of his eye, greet him with poisonous shrubs, of species hitherto unknown, that would start up under his fingers? Or might it suffice him that every wholesome growth should be converted into something deleterious and malignant at his touch? Did the sun, which shone so brightly everywhere else, really fall upon him? Or was there, as it rather seemed, a circle of ominous shadow moving along with his deformity, whichever way he turned himself? And whither was he now going? Would he not suddenly sink into the earth, leaving a barren and blasted spot, where, in due course of time, would be seen deadly nightshade, dogwood, henbane, and whatever else of vegetable wickedness the climate could produce, all flourishing with hideous luxuriance? (pp. 160-161)

The very fact that Hawthorne chooses these poisonous herbs and later mentions wormwood suggests Chillingworth's knowledge and use of dangerous medicines. If Chillingworth has administered any of these herbs in potions to Dimmesdale, it is quite possible that the physician has been poisoning the minister very gradually so that no one might suspect or detect what he has planned.

Hawthorne alludes to Hester's realization that Dimmesdale may have been poisoned at the hand of Chillingworth when she meets Dimmesdale in the forest. "She doubted not that the continual presence of Roger Chillingworth,—the secret poison of his malignity, infecting all the air about him,—and his authorized interference, as a physician, with the minister's physical and spiritual infirmities,—that these bad opportunities had been turned to a cruel purpose" (p. 177). At this point of realization, Hester confides Chillingworth's identity to Dimmesdale.

A short time later, Dimmesdale confronts the physician, and says in response to Chillingworth's offer of a prescription

> "Nay, I think not so," rejoined the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. "My journey, and the sight of the holy Apostle yonder, and the free air which I have breathed, have done me good, after so long confinement in my study. I think to need no more of your drugs, my kind physician, good though they be, and administered by a friendly hand." (p. 204)

This last utterance can be regarded as an ironic statement, for Dimmesdale is now aware of Chillingworth's disguise and torments. A few sentences later Hawthorne writes, "The physician knew then, that, in the minister's regard, he was no longer a trusted friend, but his bitterest enemy" (p. 204). As Chillingworth suggests that Dimmesdale prevent further illness by accepting a prescription, Dimmesdale wisely refuses the potion. One may assume that Dimmesdale, rejecting the potion, escapes death, yet if Chillingworth has been poisoning him little by little, the accumulated poison is bound to kill the minister in the very near future. So it is that Reverend Dimmesdale proceeds to the Election Day ceremony to deliver his address.

As if to quell any apprehension on the reader's part about the innocence of Chillingworth as a premeditated poisoner, Hawthorne supports the suggestion by adding a comment about the physician by the mariner on whose ship both Hester and Chillingworth have booked passage. "'So, mistress,' said the mariner, 'I must bid the steward make ready one more berth than you bargained for. No fear of scurvy or ship-fever this voyage. What with the ship's surgeon and this other doctor, our only danger will be from drug or pill . . ." (p. 214). Certainly, the mariner has no reason to suspect Chillingworth, yet the suggestion exists. Obviously, then, Chillingworth has the motive to commit murder, the means to commit murder, and the opportunity to commit murder.

So it is that for the time being Dimmesdale escapes death. It is important for Dimmesdale to be allowed to live until after the Election Day Sermon so that he can confess his sins. Alas, Dimmesdale is spared until he confesses, but the poison (literal and figurative poison) is in his system, and he is doomed. Thus he dies with a clear conscience, but it is up to the reader to determine whether Dimmesdale dies of natural causes or as a result of Chillingworth's medicines.

One may accept or reject the thesis that Hawthorne has written a mystery or murder mystery. However, as students have more and more difficulty relating to the moral values in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, coupled with the difficulty they encounter trying to read the novel, many students simply put the book aside and opt for less tedious work in reading a commercially produced summary and critical guide to the novel such as Cliff's Notes. Rest assured, Cliff's Notes has not covered this aspect of the novel.

In traditional methods of teaching the novel, one may, of course, try to simulate the times of the Puritans; however, that may be more difficult than can be imagined, for no matter what one does, young people have difficulty envisioning anything, that is, imagining it in the mind's eye. In teaching the novel, one tries to emphasize societal values, and one may possibly try to show similarities and differences between then and now. Certainly, the difference in morality might be presented by a panel of clergymen discussing the nature of sin, and, the matter of crimes and punishments and society's changing attitudes about them might be discussed by an attorney, judge, or law professor. However, regardless of how valuable or insightful the information might be, it still does not necessarily intrigue students sufficiently to warrant their spending time and effort reading The Scarlet Letter. Instead, this somewhat unusual approach requires one's willing suspension of disbelief and piques one's curiosity. As detectives, students are bound to become involved in solving the mystery hidden in Hawthorne's wonderful novel.

NOTES

[1] "Reopen Hamlet Murder Case," Sunday New York Times, 25 July 1982, Sec. E, p. 7, col. 1.

[2] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter. (1850; rpt. New York: Bantam, 1981). Hereafter the page numbers will appear within the text in parentheses.

INVOLVING STUDENTS WITH THE SHORT STORY

Charles R. Duke

The short story faces strong competition these days from television, which, in the span of thirty minutes, can deal quite effectively with the equivalent of the short story; in fact, most situational comedies and dramatic programs on television use the basic ingredients of the short story format rather than the more leisurely development of the novel.

In spite of the competition, or perhaps because of it, short stories retain a high popularity with both teachers and students. For teachers, the form provides a tightly structured format that offers more than adequate material for teaching basic literary concepts and for holding student interest during a class period. Because of the relative shortness of the genre, a number of different stories can be introduced in a relatively short time, providing teachers and students with ample material for a variety of approaches. The teacher also finds it easy to match short stories with other forms of literature in various units of study, thus assuring that reinforcement of the characteristics of short stories occurs over a period of time.

Students like short stories because they contain many of the recognizable elements of television, movies, and novels. Faced with reading a short story for a literature class, the student usually does not perceive the assignment as overwhelming. With some stories running only three or four pages, finishing a reading assignment ceases to become a major undertaking, and even the slow reader derives satisfaction from actually completing something that has been started.

Yet, because the short story is brief and hence seemingly simple to comprehend, we often assume that students will grasp the basic elements of it without difficulty. Nothing could be further from the truth. Experienced teachers know from painful experience that students often read without "seeing," and that the only way to get them to "see" is to isolate some of the elements and present them in a different way to focus attention on them. The creative teacher will discover numerous ways to achieve this, but here are a few suggestions.

Plot Construction. Readers tend to use the term "story" whether they are referring to a short story, a novel, or something that happened to them last night. Traditionally, of course, in literature the term suggests a series of interrelated events, otherwise known as "plot." Careful readers understand that the development of plot is involved inextricably with the selection of details; authors take great care selecting items which may be used to form the basis of action in the story. Just having a series of carefully related events, though, does not automatically produce a plot, a fact many young readers find difficult to understand. For example, if one recites the events of getting up in the morning, putting on one's clothes, preparing breakfast, eating it, going to work, coming home, eating, and then going to bed, a series of related events exists; but this is not an adequate plot for a short story until the writer directs these

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events toward answering a question or solving a problem: the resulting tension or conflict "makes" the story go. Because students frequently overlook the significance of this conflict and how it contributes to holding the reader's attention, they need to discover this in a variety of ways. Here are several activities for that purpose.

Sequence. To demonstrate the importance of sequence in plot and the necessity of conflict in a story, ask students to do the following. Give each student six 3" x 5" file cards; on each card the student is to list some event that has happened to him or her. When the cards are completed, students are to exchange them with someone. Then students pair off and, using the cards he or she received, each student arranges the events in what seems to be a logical order; with that order in mind, the student tries to construct a convincing story, which is told orally to the other person. Then the partner does the same thing with his or her cards. The exercise also can be done with prepared cards that have on them the events from a story that students are about to read. Working in groups, they can construct what they believe to be a logical sequence. Then they can read the story and compare their sequence with the actual order of events in the story. From this exercise, students learn that establishing an order of events is not always easy and building a plausible connection among incidents can become difficult.

Plot/Theme. Not infrequently, students also confuse plot and theme, using the terms interchangeably, failing to recognize that theme indicates what the work is about and plot is what happens. Students also need to recognize that writers use themes over and over, varying the plots to create interest and a fresh perspective. To assist students in making a distinction between the two, develop a collection of pictures that seem to suggest "stories." (Many teachers find it helpful to mount such pictures on cardboard to extend their life in the classroom).

Divide the class into groups of three to five, with each group receiving a work sheet and a collection of pictures. Each group is to complete the worksheet by selecting pictures that could illustrate different stories with similar themes. The students are to write one sentence summaries for each plot and indicate the number of the picture they used as a basis for the plot. The worksheet would look like this:[1]

Theme: Success rebuilds confidence.

Plot 1: A young Danish gymnast, critically burned in an automobile accident, overcomes disability, and through a series of competitive events achieves personal satisfication as well as medals of victory.
(picture no. 2)

Plot 2: ______________________________

____

After students complete the activity, they can display their choices or pictures and share some of their plot summaries. Students might then refer to their previous attempts of putting together six events and discuss why those events did or did not constitute a plot and what, if any, theme might have emerged. (When students become skilled at this kind of activity, they can produce both themes and plots).

Plot Sensitivity. Once students seem to have grasped plot structure, assess their ability to recognize effective plots by asking them to supply the ending for selected situations. Several sources for such completion exercises exist or teachers can develop their own. Such an exercise also can be used prior to the reading of a story to increase student interest and involvement. Here is one sample of such plot completion activity.[2]

> Donald was a bright, intelligent boy with high ideals of honor. His scholastic rating was very important to him. One day in a ten weeks' examination in English he came to a question that called for detailed information about the Atlantic Monthly, including the name of the editor. Though he did not remember the name, he had a copy of the magazine in his desk. Since the boy in front of him was tall, Donald was able to open his desk and look at the magazine without being observed by the teacher. He did so. The next day, ashamed of having cheated, he told the teacher, whom he knew to be a fair-minded person. What do you think happened?
>
> Read the endings listed below, keeping in mind the facts of the case, the personality of the boy, and that of his teacher. Then number the endings in the order of their probability.
>
> a. The teacher told the class what had happened and gave Donald a zero on his examination. Since that test was counted as one third of his ten weeks' average, he received a failing grade on his report card. "Let this be a lesson to all of you," said the teacher.
>
> b. The teacher said, "Thank you for telling me. I reward you for your honesty. I will give you full credit for all the answers on your paper, including the one that you copied." Donald received the highest grade in the class.
>
> c. The teacher told no one else, but gave Donald another set of questions to answer. He made a high score.
>
> d. Donald did not copy the answer from the magazine. He left a blank space on his paper.
>
> e. The teacher allowed Donald to take another examination. The questions were more difficult for him than those on the original test. Though he did well, his grade was somewhat lower than his score on the first test.

Discussion of activities like this will do much to heighten students' awareness of plots and how they may differ in quality and probability. Students may be encouraged to develop their own plot completion exercises based on outside reading and then test their classmates, for the more students are directly engaged in making choices during the reading activity, the more likely they are to become active readers.

Setting. Probably no other element in fiction gets treated as lightly as the setting. At times, of course, the blending of setting into the overall structure and effect of the story may be quite insignificant; at other times, the skillful weaving of setting and action will be such that unless there is a clear understanding of them, the reader may complete the story in a confused state.

Constant practice in examining settings and inferring clues from the story will help students perceive their significance and train them to keep track of details as a story proceeds. A passage from a story like D. H. Lawrence's "Tickets Please"[3] provides a useful sample for this kind of practice.

> There is in the Midlands a single-line tramway system which boldly leaves the country town and plunges off into the black, industrial country-side, up hill and down dale, through the long ugly villages of workmen's houses, over canals and railways, past churches perched high and nobly over the smoke and shadows, through stark, grimy cold little market-places, tilting away in a rush past cinemas and shops down to the hollow where the collieries are, then up again, past a little rural church, under the ash trees, on in a rush to the terminus, the last little ugly place of industry, the cold little town that shivers on the edge of the wild, gloomy country beyond. There the green and creamy coloured tramcar seems to pause and purr with curious satisfaction. But in a few minutes—the clock on the turret of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's shops gives the time—away it starts once more on the adventure. Again there are the reckless swoops downhill, bouncing the loops; again the chilly wait in the hill-top market-place; again the breathless slithering round the precipitous drop under the church; again the patient halts at the loops, waiting for the outcoming car; so on and on, for two long hours, till at last the city looms beyond the fat gasworks, the narrow factories draw near, we are in the sordid streets of the great town, once more we sidle to a standstill at our terminus, abashed by the great crimson and cream-coloured city cars, but still perky, jaunty, somewhat dare-devil, green as a jaunty sprig of parsley out of a black colliery garden.

Once students have finished reading the passage, engage them in the following activities:

A. Ask students what one image or picture stays in their minds after they finish reading. Build an "image skim" on the board with their responses; that is, simply list as many different impressions as you can obtain from students without their looking back at the text.

B. Then divide the class into groups of 3-5 students each, depending upon the size of the class, and divide the following tasks among the groups.

    1. Make a list of all the adverbs the author uses in the passage; then, based on your list, try to decide what the author is showing us by his use of these words.

    2. Make a list of all the adjectives the author uses; what sort of feelings or moods is he suggesting? What connection do the moods have with each other?

3. List all the things (people, objects, machines, etc.) that the writer places in the passage; how are these things alike? How are they different? What other things might the writer have included in this passage? Why do you suppose he didn't?

When students have completed their survey of the passage and had ample opportunity to frame their answers, have each group report its findings to the class. Record their observations on the board; then ask students to relate their original impressions of the passage to the details and generalizations they have made as a result of closer study. From such discussion should emerge a greater awareness of just how significant words can be in establishing a setting and how often a superficial reading results in a blurred picture of where a story is set and what the author is attempting to suggest through the setting.

This principle of word selection can be extended even further by using a modified cloze procedure, a method derived from reading instruction and designed to focus students' attention on certain types of words or certain types of reading skills. The basic cloze procedure deletes key words as a means for testing students' comprehension of those words. Using the cloze procedure for establishing an awareness of mood or setting is relatively simple. Show students a passage[4] which has a pronounced mood or setting from which key words have been deleted. Then ask students to supply the missing words.

THEY MURDERED HIM.

As we turned to take the ____1____, a ____2____ burst against the ____3____ of his ____4____ and a ____5____ ____6____ shattered his ____7____. Engulfed by ____8____, he pitched toward the ____9____. His ____10____ encountered ____11____, and he spat frantically, afraid that some of his ____12____ had been knocked out. Rising to his ____13____, he saw the ____14____ through drifting ____15____, but held on until ____16____ settled into ____17____, like a ____18____ focusing, making the ____19____ sharp again with ____20____.

Once students have completed the list of missing words, ask for their choices as the passage is read aloud—make a list of the choices for each blank. Discuss with the class the difference in effect which the choices might have on the feeling suggested by the passage; then show them the original, pointing out to them that it is not so important that they came up with the exact choices of the author, but that they were consistent in choosing words which created a certain picture or feeling.

THEY MURDERED HIM.

As we turned to take the ball, a dam burst against the side of his head and a hand grendade shattered his stomach. Engulfed by nausea, he pitched toward the grass. His mouth encountered gravel, and he spat frantically, afraid that some of his teeth had been knocked out. Rising to his feet, he saw the field through drifting gauze but held on until everything settled into place, like a lens focusing, making the world sharp again, with edges.

As a further means of suggesting to students that one element of a short story contributes to another, select a passage from a story which focuses on setting as a means of suggesting character traits. The following passage from Virginia Woolf's "The Duchess and the Jeweller" works well for this purpose.

The Duchess and the Jeweller

> Oliver Bacon lived at the top of a house overlooking the Green Park. He had a flat; chairs jutted out at the right angles—chairs covered in hide. Sofas filled the bays of the windows--sofas covered in tapestry. The windows, the three long windows, had the proper allowance of discreet net and figured satin. The mahogany sideboard bulged discreetly with the right brandies, whiskeys, and liqueurs. And from the middle window he looked down upon the glossy roofs of fashionable cars packed in the narrow straits of Piccadilly. A more central position could not be imagined. And at eight in the morning he would have his breakfast brought in on a tray by a man-servant: the man-servant would unfold his crimson dressing-gown; he would rip his letters open with his long pointed nails and would extract thick white cards of invitation upon which the engraving stood up roughly from duchesses, countesses, viscountesses, and Honourable ladies. Then he would wash; then he would eat his toast; then he would read his paper by the bright burning fire of electric coals.

Ask students to study such a passage carefully and then try to tell what kind of a person they think might be found in that setting. They must produce specific evidence from the passage to support their analysis. Frequent practice in this kind of close reading, with class discussion and sharing of ideas following, usually helps students become much more perceptive in their reading and increases their sensitivity to word choice and detail as well as to the connections that a writer builds between the different elements of a short story.

Characterization. Of all the elements in fiction, students seem to respond best to discussions of character. Too often, however, their discussions center only on the most obvious aspects, and a desire to stereotype frequently surfaces. This hastiness to label causes students to miss more subtle details and often encourages them to read superficially.

One way to demonstrate the limitations of stereotyping and make students aware of the need for collecting as much evidence as possible before forming any judgments or generalizations is to place them in a situation where evidence is very limited. To do this, select approximately ten close-up pictures of people, some relatively well-known, others quite obscure. Magazines, newspapers, and brochures offer ample material. With each picture be certain to select a statement made by the individual in the picture. "Crop" each picture if necessary so no tell-tale signs of location or occupation appear. List the statements made by the people on a separate sheet of paper and give a copy to each student. Then hang the pictures around the room or place them on the chalk tray so that students can view them easily. Ask students to study the pictures carefully, getting out of their seats (in small groups) to examine the pictures if necessary, and match each picture to a statement; urge students to jot notes to themselves as to the reasons for their choices.

After everyone has had an opportunity to match pictures and statements, conduct a poll to find out which statements were matched with which pictures; discuss the reasons for the matching. If the pictures and statements have been selected carefully, fruitful discussion about stereotypes will emerge along with a realization on the part of students that statements made without a clear sense of context may lead us into forming unjustifiable opinions. It is only a step from this kind of an exercise into a discussion of how readers arrive at an understanding of a character in fiction, using the same methods that we do when we size people up in real life.

Students also can gain experience in becoming more discriminating readers of character if they have frequent opportunities to look at samples of characterization from a variety of sources. To determine how well students are doing in developing their sensitivity to different ways of presenting character, offer them short excerpts of characterization from sources where the quality of the writing tends to range from weak to strong. Asking students to examine such passages and then rank them from best to worst will provide considerable insight for the teacher as to how far students have advanced in their literary tastes. Discussions of the rankings also will provide information that the teacher can use in later activities and selection of reading material. Here are three such samples.[6]

Characterization

1. A big bald-headed man with a boil on his chin and a boy in a short-sleeved sweatshirt were sitting on a bench in front of the station. The man was cleaning his fingernails with a leather punch blade of a Boy Scout knife. It seemed an odd kind of knife for a grown man to have, but you never know with these rednecks. I've never understood them and I never will. They're like a different race. And, of course, he didn't even look up until I slammed the car door. He wiped the blade on his overalls and closed the knife and handed it to the boy. So, that, at least, explained that. Then he got up and sauntered across the driveway toward me. He stopped with his hand on the high-test pump, and he had that closed-up look they get. You'd think he'd never seen a Thunderbird before.

2. For almost thirty years, Billy Hendricks kept all these blue-brown smiles and their few souls at peace most of the time. During his years as sheriff of Lawrence County, Billy never killed a man with his nickel-plated Colt .45, or even fired it in the line of duty. Its huge presence in his belt just naturally encouraged respect for law and order. On those rare occasions when he drew it, he only parted the hair of his adversary with its long barrel. A number of respectable Merrillsburg merchants and deacons carry small scars near their temples, prize them as badges of lurid youth, and embroider tales for their sons about the night when Billy taught them how things ought to be.

   Even more awesome than Billy's Colt was his voice. One shout, it was said, would nip a fight in the bud, curdle milk and addle the brains of babies. It was a raw rasp, a gritty bark that even in what was supposed to be quiet conversation made the flesh along the listener's backbone quiver.

3. People like Drew circulate via the tiny, remote veins, never the arteries. I was getting used to seeing her always in the shadows, or on the edge of her chair, or in the little markets on some pot-holed street that most people ignore. I expected her to find the strange little pediatrician she found, the one sho agreed with her that if Nathaniel did not feel like eating for a couple of days, he certainly wasn't going to die because of it. Drew had reasons for everything she

did. But most people did not perceive them. The one thing Drew did not have was the compulsion to find a reason to justify how she was.

Assessing Student Growth. Although testing is a definite part of our educational system, we often destroy students' interest and involvement in literature by insisting on tests which measure only objective knowledge, the memorization of facts, dates, and names. Such tests, of course, have their purpose, but too often we tend to overlook other ways of gaining insight into how our students are progressing in their levels of response to reading and in their willingness to become involved with the literature they read.

Creative teachers have long known that perhaps the best test of all is one where the student brings together all the skills and understanding developed during a unit of study and applies them to resolving a particular problem. These problem-solving "tests" need not be graded in the conventional sense; in fact, often no grade should be established at all. Instead, teacher and students should share in the solutions, discussing them, analyzing them, and using the experience as a stepping-stone toward even more exploration of the world of literature. Several such approaches for the short story are suggested below.

Improvisation. If students have had some experience with improvising dramatic responses to their reading, teachers easily can develop "starter" packages which will provide students with ample challenge and opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of different elements in short fiction. These same improvisational starters also can be used as pre-reading activities. Here is a sampling based on some well-known short stories.

Starters

1. You are visiting a friend for a month. Your friend is very popular with the opposite sex, but you don't seem to have much luck. You overhear your friend telling a group of people that you are attractive but dull. Confront the friend with this statement and demand an explanation. ("Bernice Bobs Her Hair"-Fitzgerald)

2. An alert has been sounded to evacuate all people within a 20 mile radius of Lincoln Dam, which has begun to leak; a destructive flood could occur at any moment. A young Red Cross worker has been instructed to see that all the people on a certain street leave. The worker is successful in getting the people to leave except for one very old person who comes as far as the edge of the sidewalk but refuses to go any further.

   Improvise a scene between the Red Cross worker and the old person in which the focus is upon discovering why the old person refuses to leave; play to some resolution. ("Old Man at the Bridge,"-Hemingway)

3. The following advertisement appeared once in a large daily newspaper:

   > A man with a few months to live would like nice people to adopt his little girl, six, blue eyes, curls.

References. Call 881-4220.

Improvise one or more situations which show what might have happened as a result of this ad. ("Bill," Zona Gale)

Visuals. If one of the aims of a short story unit is to determine how well students have grasped different elements of the short story, the following activity works well as a collaborative effort. Two collections of pictures are placed on display in the classroom; one set of pictures emphasizes people, the other set offers settings but no people. Students work with a partner and select at least two pictures from the "person" pile and one or more pictures from the "scene" pile. Then they are to follow these instructions.

1. Using all or some of your choices, do the following:

   A. Person
   Examine the pictures of people you have selected; working with your partner, prepare a list of what you consider to be the KEY physical traits of the individuals in the pictures; be as concrete as possible; for example, don't just say old, but select some specific detail in the picture which tells you the person is old.

   List what you consider to be the apparent personality traits of each person.

   List what you think might be each person's possible occupation.

   B. Scene
   Examine the pictures of the scenes you have selected; working with your partner, list what you consider to be the key features of your scene; include such things as time and even mood or general atmosphere; be specific again.

   C. Action
   Indicate the situation in which you envision these characters meeting or being together; identify what their major problem is; that is, what conflict is occurring which they have to face; outline briefly the key steps that they follow in trying to resolve the conflict.

   D. Statement
   If you were to write a story using the material indicated above, what would be the central idea of the story or the "point" of the story?

The results should be discussed orally—most students enjoy sharing their ideas in this situation—and then the written information may be turned in to the teacher who can examine the results for signs of the students' understanding of how various elements work together to create a potential work of fiction.

Writing. Written response is not new in the study of literature, but much of the emphasis has fallen on the student's ability to analyze critically what has been read. This undue emphasis upon critical response often short circuits the reading process for many young people; they become so concerned with labeling and analyzing that any enjoyment they might have had in the initial reading of a story quickly disappears, lost to both them and the teacher. Students need to realize that writing is a valuable extension of their feelings about a work; for this reason, students should be encouraged to explore their feelings about their reading in as many ways as possible: Reading journals, reading logs, and personal response essays.

At first such writing activity will seem foreign to many students and they will be stiff in their written response. Gradually, though, if teachers respond not so much to the critical nature of the writing but to the clarity of the students' personal responses to their reading, the opportunity to respond in this way will become an interesting and meaningful one for students. And from such personal written responses, the teacher, once again, will gain valuable insights as to how students are relating the literature they read to their own lives. Consider the following example.[7]

> I imagine the story "The Waltz" by Dorothy Parker presents a view which many girls find quite amusing. As a guy, though, it has only substantiated for me what I have always thought my dancing partner has been thinking every time I have attempted to dance slow.
>
> Probably forever, after reading this story, I am going to wonder if the "Yes, I'd love to" responses I get to my invitations are really genuine. Even the girls I've danced with that seemed to have a good time may only have been acting a part that women seem to handle with ease. For example, the girl I took to my junior prom and who said she had a good time may have been in a living hell the whole night.
>
> One area, though, that I always had thought I handled adequately was the small talk involved during a dance. The problem now is that some of the responses made in this story sound very similar to some of the responses made by my dancing partners when I said something witty.
>
> Dorthy Parker doesn't offer me any help in this dilemma. If she could have offered some hint as to how to know when your partner is suffering, I would feel more comfortable. At least then a person could leave before psychologically scarring the other person for life. Perhaps the reason she has offered no hints is that a woman cannot even understand the ways of other women. If this is so, then perhaps all women are individuals and some day I may even find one that doesn't mind or even notice if I wear a terrible-looking outfit, step on a toe, kick her in the shin, or make a stupid remark. Let's hope so.

One of the major reasons that students fail to become enthusiastic about the reading which they do in classrooms is that they have so little opportunity to discover literature on their own. The traditional short story lesson, for example, is a lesson in textual explication, usually done more by the teacher than the student. Discussions of short story texts should occur, of course, and students need to understand some things about the genre. But this does not mean that activities leading to such understanding have to be routine or repetitive. None of the activities that has been suggested will, by itself, guarantee that students will become expert readers of short fiction. What they will do, however, is involve students more directly in their reading and give them far more opportunities to explore their own responses to what they read. If we hope to increase student involvement in the reading of literature, then we will need to be sure that what we ask students to do puts this personal response as readers first and that our discussions of text and authors never lose sight of the fact that it is the reader's own relationship with the literature which determines whether or not he or she becomes an avid reader.

NOTES

[1] June B. Evans, "A Theme Is Not a Plot," Exercise Exchange (Spring 1981), 38-39.

[2] Originally devised by Sara Roody, Nyack High School, Nyack, New York, this exercise appears in Teaching Language and Literature, 2nd ed. by Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), 562; see also Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High School, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 87-98; and Raymond J. Rodrigues and Dennis Badaczewski, A Guidebook for Teaching Literature (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978), 70.

[3] From The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence, vol. 2 (New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1961). Exercise adapted from A Guide Book for Teaching Literature, p. 58.

[4] From Robert Cormier, The Chocolate War (Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), 7.

[5] From A Haunted House and Other Stories by Virginia Woolf (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1944).

[6] From Teaching Literature Today by Charles R. Duke (Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch, Publisher, 1979), 105. See this text for additional activities to increase students' involvement with literature.

[7] Ibid., p. 50.

"DOING" A POEM: "THE LURPPS ARE ON THE LOOSE"
OR
HOW TO START LOSING YOUR FEAR OF CLASSROOM DRAMA

James Charnock

If you are like me, you are probably a little scared to engage your students in classroom dramatics. Of course, if you are a kindergarten or first grade teacher, most would, traditionally, expect you to be more or less expert at this sort of thing; but a fifth or sixth grade teacher?

Scared? Well, let us say so unsure of our own and our students' abilities that we never take a story or poem or idea and turn it into a skit or play. Yet, behind this wall of a fear of failure is a desire to succeed at just this very thing--because the students obviously enjoy learning and sharing in this way.

Did I say learning? Yes. What better way to do "interpretive" (inferential, main idea, drawing conclusions) and "creative" type thinking than to translate an idea, poem, or story into a dramatic presentation. Personally experiencing the mood, motives, plot, and characterizations of a narrative or situation surely gets across these ideas vividly to students who are expected to enjoy them in their personal and critical reading and use them when writing. Since they have "been there," they know more about it.

Though I have been on the outside looking in for years (reading articles, hearing speeches and watching other teachers' students), I have almost never, myself, gotten into the action of using dramatics in my classroom. I had my rationalizations, of course: the time involved, student (mis)behavior, a lack of student talent or ability, a meager output for the effort of input, and, unadmitted, the lack of confidence in myself. The latter was probably the real reason; the former were just excuses.

It may take a total of a few hours (stretched out over a week or two) to "perfect" a ten-minute skit for presentation to others. Is it worth it? Consider that we have probably involved at least a third or more of our class personally, and all attention-wise, to the possibilities that lie within an idea, a situation, or a poem. They will see or experience many of those skills we have been trying to get across in other ways with sometimes meager results. There will be creativity but within the recognizable structure of the story. Adaptation and interpretation (both in words and body movements) represent analytical thinking--something we are usually proud to display otherwise.

We are building within the students the potential for future dramatic interpretations and sharing by demonstrating the possibilities that this one piece of literature (or what have you) can offer. We may need or want to lead them down the road the first time or two, but they will soon want to become independent and assertive if they can see we are willing to step aside and just walk with them.

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With reference to behavior, admittedly, some classes are better than others either because of our management skills, teaching techniques, or personality. Most likely we are not going to undergo a personality change so the students can experience dramatics (since we may feel they are acting up enough as it is). Our ability to manage or direct (or "control") our students is, if our personality does not do it, greatly dependent upon our techniques in teaching. And here is where classroom drama can come to our aid: as a technique that will foster not only the obvious curriculum but group cohesion, leadership, cooperation, and an acceptable way to "show off." This is not to say we will not have our problems with behavior; we may have to get angry, sit down students from time to time—even eliminate one from the action—but, all in all, we will be building momentum for the students' interest in learning and literature and their confidence in our ability to guide them.

If we have never had our students demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of an idea, situation, or piece of literature by performing it, then there is no way we can know of their ability to do so. If we have had only one or two occasions over the years to witness what our pupils can do in this area, then the effort was probably more due to the students' initiative than to our encouragement. We will probably continue to have just as few experiences.

I was surprised at the ability of my students this year in performing (interpreting to some extent) the poem that accompanies this article. Some skill was obvious from the beginning; some developed through practice and performances. Self confidence, in spite of fears, and pleasure increased and carried us forward.

To the complaint that spending several classroom hours for a ten-minute product (and not all such activities will have this ratio) is an uneconomical use of instructional time needs to be addressed. But this is difficult to do because the results of such classroom activities are not easily measured or always fast in coming. We can understand how the underlying skills developed in preparing drama or in performing pantomime and improvisation can translate into or transfer to other language arts, but we have no objective tests to demonstrate this.

Nevertheless, those of us who use such excuses to avoid classroom drama probably engage in "approved" activities which produce even less demonstrable results for the amount of time spent on them: the constant review of grammar and sentence mechanics, literary "analysis," and undue emphasis on parts of speech. Even the sacrosanct teaching of spelling is not very efficient compared to the practical results.

Probably, though, at the heart of much non-participation is our lack of confidence in guiding the students into expressive efforts. Some of this can be attributed to our own personality, lack of experience, and the absence of learning in our college course work or school staff development. But much must be to our failure to simply wade into the water. Such water is frightening when we do not know how to swim; however we have learned enough from experience, listening, reading, and watching to mimic the good swimmer. Like swimming, I am convinced that this is one activity that improves with practice.

At this point I would like to share with you a ten-minute drama activity our class performed this year. I hope it is only one of several to come. We performed it (as fifth and sixth graders) in the primary classrooms—in the classrooms mainly because I feel classroom performances are less frightening to the child than a distant, big audience; there is a more intimate relationship between performer and viewer, and the dramatists get to perform several times, which means they get to re-enjoy their success and improve their presentation and, thus, build confidence. If they flop once on the big stage, they have flopped for good.

The activity was a slightly changed poem by Jack Prelutsky (from The Snopp on the Sidewalk and Other Poems, New York, Greenwillow, 1977). We simply changed its number from the singular to the plural; thus, it was called "The Lurpps Are on the Loose." It is a monster poem that is really meant to be nonsensical; but it can be experienced with a pretense of the horrid. Here it is as adapted:

Oh the lurpps are on the loose, the loose,
the lurpps are on the loose.
They caused a fretful, frightful fuss
when they swallowed a ship and ate a bus
and now they're after all of us,
oh the lurpps are on the loose.

Oh the lurpps are on the loose, the loose,
the lurpps are on the loose.
They weigh about a zillion pounds,
they're making loud and lurppy sounds
as they follow us with bumbly bounds,
oh the lurpps are on the loose.

Oh the lurpps are on the loose, the loose,
the lurpps are on the loose.
They're covered with horns and thorns and claws
and razor teeth adorn their jaws,
so everyone's running away, because
the lurpps are on the loose.

When I first read this poem, I looked, as I always do with literature now, for a way to get it into the student's experience, a way to interpret it through an expressive art. I discovered three ways: drama (including choral speaking), music (a cappella singing) and art. Only secondarily did I speculate that we might share our adventure outside the classroom, as it so happened.

On the day of my presentation I prepared the atmosphere by pulling the shades and lighting several candles. I asked the students to imagine or remember a time when they were swept along by others who were terribly frightened by something or some one which they, themselves, had not yet seen or heard. Why would they believe these frightened persons? Why would they start to feel and act like them? The poem, I told them dramatically, is about such a situation; and it involves m-o-n-s-t-e-r-s.

I read the poem through once in as mockingly serious a voice as I could muster. After my reading they realized that my concocted atmosphere was a little too dramatic for the sense of the poem; but they seemed to appreciate the contradiction since the poem itself presented a similar one.

On the second reading I asked them to pay special attention to the description of the monsters.

Next, I asked the children to repeat (echo) each line after each was read to them—and in the manner in which each was read. (Lines one and two of each stanza were combined.) I revealed a transparency of the poem via the overhead projector and asked the students to imagine themselves being part of a crowd on the edge of a town running to spread the horrible news of this frightening monster so others could escape with their lives. The size of the crowd increases as more and more people become scared and join them in fleeing and warning others.

This imagined mood was brought into their experience more fully by using cumulative grouping for each stanza reading, as follows:

Lines 1, 2 - Teacher (or student)
Line 3 - Group A and teacher
Line 4 - Groups A, B, and teacher
Line 5 - Groups A, B, C, and teacher
Line 6 - Groups A, B, C, D, and teacher

Eventually, I dropped out of the recitation.

Next, the nonsensicalness of the poem was increased by turning it into a mockingly who's-afraid-of-the-lurpps joyous song. This was sung a cappella. (Of course, if you are talented with a musical instrument, such accompaniment can not help but be enjoyed.)

I took a few "serious" moments to ask them what they thought words like "fretful," "lurppy," "bounds," and "adorn" meant. Responses to this more typical approach did not require the typical probing.

Finally, the students engaged in what they seemed to consider the enjoyable task of drawing and coloring the worst looking and scariest monster masks to fit the poem's description. Our ESL teacher had explained the poem to my students not yet proficient in English (the Indo-Chinese) who drew some very fascinating monsters.

It was at this time that I broached the possibility of "doing" the poem in the primary classrooms. The idea was enthusiastically accepted. Especially since some of the students would get to wear the masks to thoroughly frighten some of the little people. We voted on the most suitable masks for our presentations and I cut out eye and nose holes—often nowhere near the monster's features. (Later, most masks got displayed on the hall bulletin board along with the poem and some snapshots.)

This was the point where the real work began. I used a cassette recorder to show the students how they were not together when reciting and singing, how they slurred over words or were less dramatic in voice than they could be. This helped—they liked hearing themselves on tape.

We had tryouts for those who were to solo certain parts. One student said the first stanza as dramatically as possible, then the group cumulatively recited the same stanza immediately after. And likewise with different soloists for the second and third stanzas.

After the group's recitation of the entire poem, a student came forward and boasted that THEY certainly were not afraid of any lurpps. In fact, they would even sing about them to prove their courage. Thus, during presentations in the classrooms, the dramatists marched joyously around and through the students singing the poem. But as they finished, they quietly cupped their ears as some students exclaimed, "Oh, no. it's the lurpps." This sent them, mockingly, squealing into flight. Whereupon, in came six monstrous looking lurpps grabbing children left and right. Oh, the shrieks, looks of fright, and laughter. "Did you enjoy being scared?" I asked later. The response was a chorus of yesses.

Now that it is over how would I have rated our three presentations? The first one was a C+. We came back to the room and discussed what we liked and did not like about it. Next, for some unclear reason, we earned a D—and everyone knew it: certain pupils had led the group incorrectly in the song, and they had had to start over; it was flat and not joyous in tone; and some of the solo and chorus parts were weak.

Apparently they did not want a repeat of that experience because on the third presentation they got an A—absolutely exciting and without a hitch. (Even my warming-up talk and conclusion with the class got a "You were pretty good, too, Mr. Charnock.") They were so buoyed up by this experience that they requested to go into the fourth grade class which they had formerly not wanted to do because of the children's ages being so close to theirs and because of the nature or subject of the skit.

I have shared this experience with you because I wanted you to wade into the water with me. I have lots to learn, and am sure to have some attempts by my students and myself not work out, but we will never learn to swim if we give up because we swallow water once in a while.

SPUR LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH CLASSROOM THEATRE PROJECTS

The best elementary teachers are always on the lookout for activities that help them integrate the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. A new book from NCTE, READERS THEATRE: STORY DRAMATIZATION IN THE CLASSROOM, brings a wealth of experience in children's drama and education to the aid of the classroom teacher, describing how readers theatre works and supplying a start-to-finish guide for using it in schools. Shirlee Sloyer, the author, uses folk tales, fables, short plays, poetry, and other children's literature. Through sample teacher-student dialogues, she shows how to guide a class in solving problems such as "How would the North Wind talk?" and "How can we show that a day has passed?"

READERS THEATRE: STORY DRAMATIZATION IN THE CLASSROOM by Shirlee Sloyer. 134 pages, paper. Price $11; NCTE members $9.50. ISBN: 0-8141-3838-1. LC: 82-8146. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 38381.

"YOUNITS": GUIDED INDEPENDENT STUDY

Linda Shadiow

> At school Mrs. Dickens liked Paul's picture of the sailboat better than my picture of the invisible castle.
> At singing time she said I sang too loud. At counting time she said I left out sixteen. Who needs sixteen?
> I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.
>
> Judith Viorst
> Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Although the junior and senior high school students who have been in my English classes through the years might express their feelings a little differently, they have much in common with Viorst's Alexander. My introduction of a unit on poetry, nonfiction, or mythology seemed more likely to initiate the Alexander-type question, "Who needs it?" rather than the unbridled ecstacy my pre-teaching fantasies led me to expect. It seemed that by the time they became freshmen or sophmores they had the lesson plans down from previous experiences: "poetry" meant memorizing a verse, writing a poem, and making a book of their favorites; "mythology" meant listening to records, studying advertisements, and making a modern myth. Some of them even used their previous experiences to foretell their grades: "I hate writing poems, so I'll get a D on that part." "Mythology has never been my thing—just let me sleep."

I didn't want to let them sleep—I wanted them to suspend their doubts and get involved in learning. It occurred to me that one of the problems was that I was always making decisions about how and what they would learn, based on my own successes as a student and teacher, not theirs. After reading material on independent study approaches and observing how some of my colleagues were coping with the same problems, I set out to develop an approach that would take care of my needs as a teacher and their needs as the learners.

1. I needed to provide some fundamental material in a unit of study so we all had a common basis for discussion and understanding.
2. I needed to be able to keep track of student work and to have the opportunity to assist students with individual problems.
3. They needed the chance to use the fundamental material from a unit in a variety of ways, based on their interests and skills.
4. They needed to feel in control of their success rather than restricted by their previous work.

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Anne, who sat in the front row with her unabridged version of Don Quixote sticking out of her leather briefcase, looked at me one day over the top of her round glasses and called the result "Younits" because "they are more ours than yours."

The independent study packets were designed to extend the basic information from a unit in a variety of ways and to allow the students to make choices not only about what work they would do, but also about the grade they would earn. In mythology class we worked on a unit on the roles of men and women in mythology. After spending a week on text (Myths and Modern Man) and supplementary readings, students began to work with one of the thirty projects listed in the "younit."

#1 Read the article, "The Occult," in NEA Journal, September 1971. In a 1-2 page paper discuss parallels between the needs for mythology in ancient times and the renewed interest in the areas of astrology and the occult.
2 points

#2 Using the comment on matriarchy and patriarchy on page 59 in Myths and Modern Man, select a myth or a story that fits each category and explain the stories' matriarchal and patriarchal characteristics.
1 point

#3 Read Ibsen's play, "A Doll's House." Explain in a page summary how both Nora and Torvald play roles which relay the myth of the times.
5 points

#4 Create a collage which you feel represents the myth of the male or female role in society today. A brief explanatory sheet should accompany this.
1 point

#5 Decide on a project which is not listed here, present the idea to me. Be prepared to suggest a point maximum.
1 point

#6 Using mythology as a basis for your work, describe the perfect mortal man or woman for classical Greek society or Northern European society.
1 point

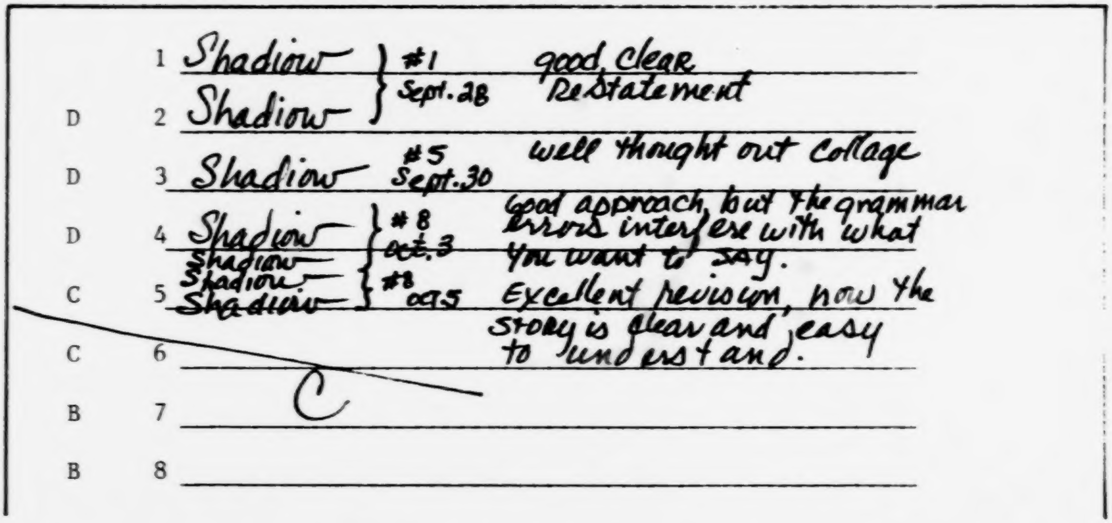
#7 Listen to the Marlo Thomas record, "Free to Be, You and Me." Write a myth, Greek, Norse, or contemporary, which would challenge the stereotyped role of either sex for that society.
3 points

#8 Read Mary Renault's, Mask of Apollo. This fiction book gives an accurate description of life during Classical times. Write a 1-2 page report discussing the sex roles as they are presented in the story and indicate whether or not the roles are similar to those reflected in the myths.
10 points

The point value associated with each project represented a maximum award. The number was assigned to the project based on an estimate of the amount of time necessary for completion—one point equaled approximately one hour of student work. The point assignments started out as my estimates, but as the projects were done by students, a few were revised at their suggestion. All materials necessary for project work were in the classroom. The amount of class time set aside to work on the projects determined the number of points needed to attain a C for the entire "younit." If five class hours were provided for project work, five points on the grade scale would be a C. This made it possible for any student to obtain a C simply by using all available class time. Once the packets were distributed, the following procedures were followed:

1. Students would each determine which porject they would begin with and get the necessary materials.
2. When a project was completed, the student would turn in both the project and the packet score sheet and begin work on another project.
3. The project would be evaluated and a point score would be given. The score would be indicated cumulatively on the score sheet.
4. The score sheet and graded project would be returned to the student as quickly as possible (usually the next day).
5. The student would rework the project if necessary or return the graded work to his/her file with me.
6. The student would continue to follow the procedure until the conclusion of the time set aside for "younit" work.

At the conclusion of the "younit," a student score sheet would look like this:



1 Shadiow } #1 Sept.28 good, clear Restatement
D 2 Shadiow
D 3 Shadiow #5 Sept.30 well thought out Collage
D 4 Shadiow Shadiow } #8 oct.3 Good approach, but the grammar errors interfere with what you want to say.
C 5 Shadiow Shadiow } #8 oct.5 Excellent revision, now the story is clear and easy to understand.
C 6
C
B 7
B 8

Projects did not always get awarded the maximum number of points; if they were returned for additional work, the student still had the option to rework and resubmit, or to continue working on a new project. Working individually with students on problems in research or writing was possible during each class period when they were involved in the study projects.

I still wasn't greeted by unbridled ecstasy when they walked into English class, but things had improved. Students like Anne were challenged to read hefty books and to explore their own potential—many took it upon themselves to scout for new resources that could be incorporated into future "younits." Students like Nancy and Paul who consistently got B's but wanted A's saw that better grades were a real possibility. Students like Connie and Martin who had been stumped by translating the rules of grammar into written compositions got individual help, practice, and better. Students like Sue and Gary who had learned to reflect their labels as underachievers learned to trust the system and to plan their own learning. And students like Alexander . . . they learned that walking into English class did not necessarily mean it was going to be a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

NEW GUIDE TRACES RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FICTION ABOUT AFRO-AMERICANS

Since 1965 a true Black literature for children has begun to emerge. In her new book, children's literature specialist Rudine Sims analyzes the stages in this transition, from publishers' long-standing pattern of ignoring the lives of Blacks toward authentic portrayal of Black people and their culture. Sims analyzes 150 works of fiction published since 1965 for children preschool through 8th grade. Her study, accompanied by a series of bibliographies, offers teachers, children's librarians, and parents a useful guide to books about the Black experience.

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE: AFRO-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S FICTION, by Rudine Sims. 111 pages, paper. Price $6.00; NCTE members $5.50. ISBN: 0-8141-4376-8. LC: 82-6518. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

DEVELOPING ETHNIC LITERACY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THROUGH READING AND LITERATURE

Elizabeth E. Seittelman

The United States is a nation composed of people different from each other in race, religion and national origin. For many years, some groups felt alienated from the schools because their cultural traditions and values were ignored by the curriculum. In the last decade, multi-ethnic education addressed this issue on a twofold basis: the pupils of each particular ethnic group are afforded an opportunity to study about their roots in the classroom; mutual respect is fostered among all the pupils by making them aware of the meaning and relevance of the cultural heritage, traditions, values, and contribution of members of each group.

In this article, we propose to consider three types of reading and literature as approaches to multi-ethnic education in the elementary schools: information books, folktales, and biographies.

Some basic assumptions for this approach are, first, that the similarities rather than the differences among people be stressed to avoid divisiveness and separatism. Second, more than one source should be consulted on any aspect of an ethnic group. Third, emphasis should be placed on individuals rather than on the groups themselves.

First, the teacher identifies the ethnic groups represented in the class and plans lessons around them. The study of additional ethnic groups will be added later. All references to reading materials and literature are suitable both in content and reading level for elementary school pupils.

First, pupils acquire an overview of the ethnic groups studied by reading information books that present an accurate, interesting, and empathetic account and consulting appropriate reference materials.

Each classroom library should have a copy of Raymond a. Wohlrabe and Werner E. Krusch's Picture Map Geography on Western Europe,[1] which includes a brief history of each country, its culture and traditions, the physical features of the land, the products, industries, and life styles, and Vernon Quinn's Picture Map Geography of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies.[2] Especially recommended is Ronald P. Grossman's "In America Series."[3] There is a volume for almost every ethnic group in the United States. Each volume surveys the history of the particular ethnic group in America, the individual period of mass immigration, the character of the immigrants, and their contribution to American society.

Also for upper grade pupils, J. Joseph Huthmacher, A Nation of Newcomers: Ethnic Minority Groups in American History[4] surveys how several ethnic groups were treated when they came and their contributions to American society.

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Some recommended books for their treatment of individual ethnic groups are the first two of a six volume series entitled Coming to America: Linda Perrin, Immigrants From The Far East;[5] Shirley Blumenthal and Jerome S. Ozer, Immigrants From The British Isles.[6] Others are Dorothy dowdell's books, The Chinese Helped Build America[7] and The Japanese Helped Build America;[8] Ruth Holland's The Oriental Immigrants in America;[9] Frances Butwin's The Jews in America—History and Sources;[10] James A. Banks and Cherry A. Banks's March Toward Freedom: A History of Black Americans;[11] Deloris Holt's The ABC's of Black History;[12] Milton Meltzer's In Their Own Words, A History of The American Negro 1619-1865;[13] Marcella Thum's Exploring Black America: A History And Guide;[14] and Edgar A. Toppin's The Black American in United States History.[15]

Several books on Puerto Rico are appropriate for pupils in grades five and six: Antonio J. Colorado's The First Book of Puerto Rico[16] describes the geography, history, economy and current issues; Robert E. Connors and Donald R. Haener's Puerto Rico, an Island on The Move[17] outlines Puerto Rican geography, history, economy, and society. There is a discussion of El Barrio, mainland life and problems of Puerto Ricans, some famous Puerto Ricans, and the future of Puerto Rico. This book is part of a multimedia kit which consists of Study Prints with bilingual captions, a filmstrip, This is Puerto Rico, also with bilingual captions, transparencies and spirit masters. For middle grade pupils, Edna McGuire's Puerto Rico: Bridge to Freedom[18] is an historical overview with an introduction by Hon. Luis Munoz Marin, former Governor of Puerto Rico. For pupils in grade two, Natalie Nelson's Discovering Puerto Rico in English and Spanish[19] not only discribes the people and their lifestyle in Puerto Rico but also includes Puerto Ricans on the mainland.

Pictorial presentations help pupils visualize the material. Thus, for example, such books as Salvatore J. Guineca's An Album of Italian Americans;[20] Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer's A Pictorial History of the Negro in America;[21] Eugene Murphy and Timothy Driscoll's An Album of Irish Americans;[22] Rosebud Yellow Robe's An Album of the American Indians;[23] and Yuri Suhl's An Album of the Jews in America[24] are recommended as illustrated narrative histories for upper grade pupils.

Some follow-up activities for pupils are:

1. to bring in human interest articles about persons of given ethnic groups and report on them in class.
2. to bring to class photographs of family and/or friends when they first came to this country. They will prepare a narrative for the photograph exhibit.
3. to imagine they are a person in the picture and record their first impressions of their new environment.

An effective approach to the traditions and values of the many ethnic groups is the study of memoirs.

Reading about early experiences of ethnic groups is recommended, for example, Linda Heller's The Castle on Hester Street[25] and Barbara Cohen's Gooseberries to Oranges,[26] Sheyann Webb and Rachel West Nelson's Selma, Lord, Selma. Girlhood Memories of the Civil Rights Days[27] and Joanne E. Bernstein's Dmitry: A Young Soviet Immigrant.[28]

Upon the completion of this phase of the unit, some suggested student activities are:

1. to view films, filmstrips, pictures and/or transparencies on some related topics of ethnic groups in America.
2. to develop time liens on which the various waves of immigration are indicated.
3. to prepare charts of the ethnic composition of the immediate community and to indicate special services available for newcomers to the community.
4. to prepare a class mural on the American mosaic in the making.
5. to plan and sponsor a multi-ethnic cultural grade festival.
6. to identify the local and state political leaders and their ethnic traditions.
7. to interview community persons of a given ethnic group to determine by carefully constructed questions, why and when they came to the United States, where they came from, what problems they encountered and how they see the future. Students will compare and contrast their findings with those of other students.
8. to identify the names of towns and cities in their state that reflect some connection with places in other parts of the world and to research their ethnic roots. For example, Geneva, Florida; Athens, Georgia; Moscow, idaho; Berlin, Illinois; dublin, Indiana; Milan, Kansas; Mexico, Maine; Leeds, Mass.; Oslo, Michigan; Glasgow, Montana; Syracuse, New York; Tripoli, Wisconsin.

A vital part of the tradition of all ethnic groups is folktales. In planning phase two of the unit, the teacher selects several themes and includes storytelling as well as reading of examples from several ethnic groups on a given theme. The pupils discuss and analyze the similarities and differences of the folktales studied.

The theme of "The Bride Test for Marriage" is delightfully illustrated by the Irish folktale, The Widow's Lazy Daughter. Students will compare and contrast the treatment of this motif in this folktale with Mollie Whuppie (English).

A special example of this motif is "Cinderella," which is appropriate for a unit on multiethnic education. Since it is found in numerous cultures the pupils read and discuss the French,[30] German, "Ash Maiden",[31] Neapolitan "Cerentola",[32] English "Tattercoats",[33] Russian (Vasilisa the Beautiful),[34] and American Indian "Little Burnt Face",[35] versions. They will identify the similar elements in these stories and analyze the details of such variants as the donors of the gifts, the obstacles to Cinderella's attending the ball, and the fate of Cinderella's sisters.

Some appropriate activities are for pupils to tell a Cinderella story from their own ethnic backgrounds or to compare and contrast the illustrations of various verious versions of Cinderella.[36] Pupils may compose a contemporary American Cinderella story.

Additional themes may be studied, such as magical transformation, wishes, and trickery.

Through the study of folktales, the children will appreciate the common factors of many cultures as reflected in the folktales. They will also identify the specific elements that make the story unique and singular to each group studied.

The celebration of special days[37] such as the Chinese New Year,[38] Jewish Holidays[39] and Holidays or special persons for whom parades are held, such as, Columbus, St. Patrick, Steuben, Polaski or the eleven weeks designated to recognize our debt to the heritage and culture of specific ethnic groups—Black, Chinese, Greek, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Pan American, Puerto Rican, Scandinavian, and Slavic--raise the pupils' awareness of our national multiethnicity. These occasions, moreover, provide an excellent framework for the study of biographies of those who have contributed to improving our lifestyle or society.

Newspapers and magazines frequently explain these special events clearly and succinctly. The teacher should clip articles and use them in the classroom. Thus, for example, The Yonkers Herald Statesman of October 2, 1982, explains why and how the Jewish people celebrate the harvest festival, Succoth, or Feast of the Tabernacles.[40]

One aspect of the contribution of key figures is the study of biographies around a theme such as "The Search For Freedom and Civil Rights." The Jewish celebration of Hanukkah may be studied and discussed in this context. Such books as Miriam Chaikin's Light Another Candle: The Story and Meaning of Hanukkah,[41] and Betty Morrow's A Great Miracle, The Story of Hanukkah,[42] explain the holiday for pupils in the middle and upper grades.

The biographies of Albert Einstein[43] and Enrico Fermi[44] can be studied in this context since they were the victims of the hatred and intolerance of the Nazis.

The problems that confronted blacks in America may also be studied in this context. Thus, Philip Sterling and Rayford Logan's Four Took Freedom: The Lives of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Robert Smalls and Blanche Bruce[45] is an interesting and enjoyable collection of biographies for middle and upper grade pupils. For primary school pupils, Beth P. Wilson's Martin Luther King Jr.[46] is appropriate.

An excellent resource for multi-ethnic treatment of this topic for pupils in grades four through six are units I and II of Eva Knox Witte's American Biographies[47]—Unit I: Law and Government includes Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Earl Warren. Unit II: Civil Rights treats Roger Williams, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Walter White, Martin Luther King, and Thurgood Marshall.

Also recommended for this grade level are Daniel S. Davis's Struggle For Freedom: The History of Black Americans[48] and Ed Clayton's Martin Luther King: The Peaceful Warrior.[49]

Another suggested unit for biography is the contributions of Americans to science. A good introduction for middle and upper grade pupils is Mildred Stanek's How Immigrants Contributed To Our Culture.[50] An excellent source of brief biographical sketches for use in the classroom is Annie E. S. Beard's Our Foreign Born Citizens.[51] From this collection, students may become aware of the contributions of the following scientists: John James Audubon (France); John Muir (Scotland); Charles

Proteus Steinmetz (Germany); Hideyo Noguchi (Japan); Igor Sikorsky (Russia); Albert Einstein (Germany); and Enrico Fermi (Italy).

A similar unit may be planned on leaders in the American Labor Movement. These biographies may be considered: Samuel Gompers (England/Jewish);[52] Philip Murray (Ireland); David Dubinsky (Poland/Jewish);[53] and A. Philip Randolph (Africa).[54]

Some suggested follow-up activities for students are:

1. to prepare projects on the contributions of persons from various ethnic groups on such aspects as politics, music, art and architecture, theatre and entertainment, and business and management.
2. to collect cancelled stamps commemorating famous Americans and to prepare biographical sketches of these persons.
3. to bring in foreign newspapers with accounts of a special commemoration to be compared and contrasted with those in the English newspapers.

These are some suggestions for introducing multi-ethnic education as part of the language arts experience to foster ethnic literacy in the elementary schools.

NOTES

[1] New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1967.

[2] New York: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1965.

[3] Revised editions published Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lerner Publications.

[4] New York: Dell.

[5] New York: Dell Publishing, 1981.

[6] New York: Dell Publishing, 1981.

[7] New York, Julian Messner, Inc., 1972.

[8] New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1970.

[9] New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1969.

[10] New York: Behrman House Inc., 1973.

[11] 2nd edition, Belmont, California: Fearon, 1974.

[12] Pasadena: Ritchie Ward Press, 1971 (Grades 3-5).

[13] 3 vols. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1965.

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SOME RELATED AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

Accent on Ethnic America. 6 filmstrips with 1 cassette each. Eye-Gate: The Chinese American (7086C); A Unique Heritage-The Polish American (7087C); Colonia-The Mexican America (7088C); El Barrio-The Puerto Rican (7089C); Shtetl to Suburb-The American Jew (7090C); The Italian American (7091C).

Friends of Many Cultures. 9 films-9 min. each (Grades K-4)-Encyclopaedia Britannica: Pennsylvania Dutch Friends; Italian American Friends; German American Friends; Puerto Rican American Friends; Mexican American Friends; Cuban American Friends; Eskimo Friends; Miccosukee Indian Friends; Apache Indian Friends.

Holidays and Celebrations Around the World. 2 filmstrips with cassettes. (Grades K-4)-National Geographic Educational Services: Special Days for Special People; Special Times of Year.

New Friends from Distant Lands: The Culture We Share. 5 filmstrips with 5 cassettes (Grades 4-6)-Pathescope: Children from Beirut, Athens, Rome, Istanbul, and London.

Our Multi-Ethnic Heritage. 5 color filmstrips with 5 cassettes, activity worksheets, Guides (Grades 5+)-Educational Activities.

The Story of America's People. 10 captioned color filmstrips (F191) with cassette (TF191)-Eye Gate: The hungarian American; The Italian American; The Afro-American; The Hispanic American; The Scandinavian American; The Jewish American; The Irish American; The German American; The Polish American; the British American.

What Is An American? Part I: Culture, Immigrants. 10 min. film-color-rental (Grades K-3)-Kent State.

Specific

300 Memorable Events in American Jewish History. filmstrip. Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Cultural Pride: I Am A Latino. 1 filmstrip, 2 cassettes and Teacher's manual (Grades 4-6)-Pathescope.

Inside Chinatown (San Francisco). 43 min. film.-color (Grades 5-6)-Phoenix.

The Gift of the Black Folk. 16 min. film-color. Rental-Pyramid Films: Survey of the lives of three Black leaders' struggle for freedom-Denmark Vesey, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglas.

INTERNATIONAL GROWTH OF THE JUNIOR NOVEL

Osayimwense Osa

This article is intended to provide teachers and all lovers of adolescent literature with some idea of the development, current trends, and characteristics of adolescent literature internationally. It is neither exhaustively complete nor completely definitive. The junior novel is a dynamic genre, and any attempt at an authoritative, definitive account of its current trends and characteristics internationally would be rather premature. This article seeks, rather, to illustrate for teachers the tremendous benefit inherent in the use of some major international junior novels in the classroom.

> As we move into multi-national economic, ecological, and cultural enterprises and inter-dependencies, it becomes increasingly important for students to recognize national similarities and differences, but above all to recognize our common bond, our common lot. A study of world literature contributes much to an appreciation and understanding of the heritage we share (Carrier and Oliver, 1980, p. 3).

Literature undoubtedly evolves out of a people's historical and cultural experience, and at the young adult stage of development, a reading of a rich myriad of adolescent novels helps the young adult to learn and appreciate cultures of other parts of the world. For Stephen Dunning (1959), what happens to the student as a result of his experience with literature is more important than the quality of the literature as judged by adult criteria. Literature is not an end but merely the means to the end of developing the student through experiences with literature (Pooley, 1950, p. 398).

As in American literature, the genres represented most in German youth literature and contemporary Nigerian youth literature are those of the junior novel, or adolescent novel, or young adult novel, or youth novel, as indicated by the terms "Jugendroman" (German for youth novel) and "Jugendgschicte" (German for youth story). In this article, the terms will be used interchangeably because they are basically the same. The contemporary junior novel essentially presents literature as a vision of life which adolescents can readily understand and not as a tedious mass of information experientially irrelevant to them. The junior novel makes literature readily meaningful to youths by making contact with cultural values, social functions, and individual lives. To do less makes literature somewhat irrelevant to the steadily emerging world's youth culture that cannot afford any more irrelevancies.

If books are to have any meaning they must be related to the young person's personal and social needs (Carlsen, 1967, p. 10). The basic developmental tasks which the teenager must undertake are:

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1. Discovering his sex role;
2. Developing new relationships with people his own age;
3. Achieving an easy relationship with members of the opposite sex;
4. Accepting his physical body;
5. Changing his relationship with his parents;
6. Working for pay;
7. Finding a vocation;
8. Becoming aware of his value patterns.

(Carlsen, 1967, pp. 10-12)

The junior novels which will be discussed in this article relate to young adults' personal and social needs and mirror their developmental tasks. The place where youths can readily read about what they deem relevant is the junior novel. An important place where youths can find international materials, the junior novel genre, is steadily maturing. Today, there is a growing depository of international materials on juvenile literature. Joan Stidham Nist (1981) writes:

> from its modest beginnings as an exhibition for book-hungry youngsters, the International Youth Library (an associated project of UNESCO in Munich, Germany) has become the foremost library in the world dedicated to international children's and youth's literature. (p. 33)

Alongside this growing depository is an equally growing body of criticism of young adult literature.

Despite its comparatively young age, the junior novel has taken giant strides into the academic world. "With the Modern Language Association now recognizing the importance of this branch of study, more attention is being called to the need for a body of criticism to insure academic respectability for work in this area" (Matthews, 1976, p. 216). The junior novel is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. It is already established in the United States, and it has been taken seriously for a long time in the Federal Republic of Germany according to Rado Pribic (1981). Nist (1980) states, "youth literature in Germany has flourished as part of the resurgence of that country in the past thirty years" (p. 7). It is interesting to note that Joan Stidham Nist spent the summer of 1979 working at the International Youth Library and that Rado Pribic spent his sabbatical in Germany, and both subsequently developed an interest in German youth literature. Nist (1980) found that some trends in German youth literature are similar to those in the United States:

> A critical assessment of German youth literature in the past year (Gerd F. Rumbler, Kinder-und Jegend-literature in Deutscher Sorache, Munchen: Internationale Jugendbibliothek, 1979) points to three trends. First, there is a growth in emphasis by authors and their publishers upon the literary quality of works so that themes are presented aesthetically rather than didactically. . . . third in theme and expression, the so-called boundaries between 'children', 'youth', and 'grown-up' literature are becoming permeable ("durchlassig"); there has been an advance toward "literarisch integration" through such boundaries, evident not only in the newer materials of certain publishers but also in specially developed programs for young adults ("junge Erswachsene"). (p. 7)

Junior literature's great development seems to be confined presently to the United States. However, American youths miss, to some extent, reading about another culture. John Donovan (1979), executive director of Children's Book Council, bluntly states the situation in School Library Journal:

> For the last decade . . . there were years in which there were less than a dozen translated children's books published in the United States, and there has not been a year in which as many as 75 translations have appeared. . . . an objective assessment of contemporary American children's reading would have to conclude that American children read a body of books that may be more parochial than those read by children anywhere in the developed world. (p. 52)

As far back as 1956, Charles Stephen Lewis discovered somewhat the same thing. In his doctoral disseration, "The Treatment of Foreign Peoples and Cultures in American High School Literature Books," he found little delineating modern conditions in foreign lands in American high school literature books. And even then that little represented only a portion of the globe. This situation might be explained on the grounds that young adult reading materials elsewhere were not substantive enough to merit international attention. But today, young adult literature is on a steady rise internationally. Hence Joan Stidham Nist (1980) expresses a yearning:

> Hopefully, adolescent literature in the United States will grow along the lines of other countries like Germany, which provide a range of international reading choices for their readers. (p. 26)

Such a hoped for development will eventually call for a need for a comparative study of young adult literature in two or more countries.

Apart from Alan C. Purves's Literature Education in Ten Countries, which essentially examines the "response pattern" of students in ten different countries and the effects of cultural milieu on cognitive achievement and interest, and also the effectiveness of different nations in achieving their stated objectives in literature, no other study with a comparative flavor has been done. Although Purves's work and the other works in International Studies in Evaluation (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) have been the most extensive empirical study ever carried out in comparative education and represent a landmark in the history of educational research, Literature Education in Ten Countries falls short of a concise specific comparative study of the literature of two countries or more. The ten countries Alan C. Purves looks at, for students' "response patterns" to literature texts and instruction in literature, are: Belgium (Flemish speaking), Belgium (French speaking), Chile, England, Finland, Italy, Iran, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States.

A comparative study of young adult literature of two or more countries so as to see if adolescence is basically the same everywhere is academically worthwhile. A broader perspective of the junior novel genre rather than a narrow one is quite conductive to fruitful theorizing. But how can one achieve a broader perspective of the junior novel genre which will subsequently help in fruitful theorizing? It is undoubtedly through some familiarity with some good junior novels from other cultures in which the genre is on the rise. Some examples are Germany, Nigeria, Karnataka in India, and Greece.

Most popular German young people's books deal with one of the following topics: terrorism; minorities and other groups of outsiders; the career world; and personal, psychological conflicts intertwined with social issues. What is new in German young people's books today as identified by Rado Pribic (1981) has to do, in the main, with the last one among these four topics:

> This intertwining of social issues and personal problems has become fashionable only in the last two to three years. Before that, authors would write about either social problems or problems of the individual; a combination of the two would have been unusual. (p. 304)

The theme of minorities and other groups of outsiders as dealt with in the junior novel in Germany is important because it can provide the American readers some idea of how others deal with the problem they (Americans) may be familiar with. The United States, as well as the Federal Republic of Germany, has minorities. While the minority groups are more in the U.S. than in Germany, the problems these minorities encounter, especially in resettlement, are basically the same.

Some significant minorities in the U.S. are the blacks; Latin Americans-Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans; Jewish Americans; and Orientals. In Germany the major minority groups are the foreign workers and their families. The minorities theme has recently crept into the German junior novel. Sigrid Schuster-Schmah's *Staatsangehorig keit Griechisch (Citizen Greek)* is the story of an adolescent girl—fourteen-year-old Irina—who returns to her homeland after eight years in Germany. Unlike Irina's parents, who regard their stay in Germany as a temporary occurrence, Irina regards Germany as her "homeland." She misses her school, her friends, and all that constituted the good life in Germany. Overtly, the major thrust of Schuster-Schmah's *Staatsangehorig keit Griechisch* is that erratic, freakish, or whimsical resettlements create some sensitive questions for youths of foreign workers either in their homeland or in their host countries. Is this not the plight of most children of minorities, especially Orientals and Latin Americans, in their whimsical or arbitrary resettlements? The question of minorities and the problem of their children when resettling is therefore not a unique problem in America.

The choice of a career confronts adolescents sometime in their lives and this universal problem also is reflected in junior novels from different cultures. In Agbo Areo's *The Hopeful Lovers*, a Nigerian junior novel, nineteen-year-old Roseline thinks so seriously about her future career and marriage prospects that she cannot sleep. In Jo Pestum's *Auf einem weissen Pferd Nach Suden* (*On a White Horse Southward*), a German junior novel, Schimmi among other things tells the story of his fruitless effort to make a career, become rich, and leave poor northern Essen for southern Essen where the wealthy live. Wolfgang Gabel's *Der Aufsteiger* (*The Climber*), unlike Jo Pestum's *Auf einem weissen Pferd nach Suden*, describes the successful career route of Helmut Hassler, a high school student. In addition to these few, a host of other junior novels deal with the question of career among youths.

The occurrence of universal themes in Nigerian junior novels is particularly interesting since a substantive corpus of such junior literature has developed only recently in the seventies. Prior to this time the literature of Nigeria and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa was found mainly outside of books. This body of literature is the "Oral Tradition" of Africa. Despite the comparatively young age of the written Nigerian junior novel, there are already similarities between it and its American, German, and Indian counterparts.

As in early American junior novels, one aspect which seems to be an overriding commonality in the new Nigerian junior novel is didacticism. Part of this may be due to the newness of the genre (in Nigeria). However, in the case of Nigeria, a didactic or moral stance has always been a part of this culture's literature for juveniles. Ropo Sekoni (1980) contends that:

> The short novels in Macmillan's Pacesetters series, now steadily on the increase, deserve the attention of critical readers. While it is too soon to theorize on why highly educated writers now resort to highly didactic themes such as are copiously featured in this series, the clarity of expression and the simplicity of vision that characterize some of the series such as Sam Adewoye's The Betrayer and Agbo Areo's The Hopeful Lovers are potential materials for a sociological study of the development of fiction in West Africa. (p. 40)

In theorizing about the present didactical preponderance of Macmillan Pacesetters novels, one needs to look at the cornerstone of traditional Nigerian or African education. This cornerstone is character education. There comes of necessity a demand for written literature that addresses character education in the African context. This is precisely what Nigerian junior novels are doing presently. This does not imply that every Nigerian young adult book should be didactic. Nevertheless, the pervading ethical tone of a book should be sound and worthwhile. The audience that the books are geared to—the young adult—will find them meaningful, especially at a time when standards of conduct are being formed. The need to have morally upright youth has pervaded Nigerian educational policy for a long time.

Nigerian adults have always felt duty bound to guide the youths, and most African oral traditions and written junior novels abound with morals. Nigerian youths are used to having moral lessons which are usually stated, bluntly or subtly, at the end of a story. Accordingly, Cyprian Ekwensi craftily guides his The Drummer Boy toward a moral: be good and live a virtuous life. Akin, who has always led a simple happy life before going to the school for the blind, refuses to participate in the robbery exploits of Herbert and his associates but instead helps those in need. He helps Aduke to get money through his drumming, and in the school for the blind Akin continues his goodness. Ekwensi's loading of the end of the novel with goodness and cleanliness after Bisi's visit to the school reveals the novel as bluntly didactic:

> She looked quickly away to the woods where Akin, the Drummer Boy, was radiating happiness, in a manner to make everyone think only of doing good, of being good, and of living a clean life. (p. 81)

In Jide Oguntoye's Too Cold for Comfort, Hannah's mother comes on to the scene when her daughter's marriage is on the verge of total breakdown because of her religious fanaticism. Her advice to her daughter, which amounts somewhat to a sermon, assumes the dimension of didacticism: cooperate and compromise with you husband rather than run away from his home:

> Now, I say stop accepting religion to the point of irrationality. . . . I will listen to you only when you have settled with your husband. And keep this in mind—never starve your husband of love. Nobody wants to sign "for better for worse" only to be sex-starved. Monogamy belongs to the devoted and untiring

> lovers. You must be ready to sacrifice anything to your marriage, to your husband's happiness; no limit to intimacy except on very reasonable grounds. (p. 151)

In The Betrayer, Sam Adewoye guides the tale of Olayemi's recklessness toward stating a moral:

> Olayemi had learned one of the most important lessons of life at last. A man must always be concerned about the way he treats the people he meets as he climbs up for, more likely than not, he will meet them again when he crashes down. (p. 108)

The morals are often stated vantageously at the end of the novels for the young adult to remember the essence of the story. While didacticism is apparent in the present Nigerian junior novel, it is hard to say unequivocally that it will stand the test of time. With time and increased sophistication, there is every likelihood that didacticism will diminish. In its pedagogical content the present Nigerian junior novel is like the early American junior novel but significantly different from the contemporary American junior novel.

Didacticism is also visible in the junior literature in India. M. S. Puttana's classic, Nitichitamani (Morals that Could Grant All Desires), which appeared in 1884, is a collection of stories in fifteen volumes embracing the world of epics and religious lore. As the title suggests, the stories in Nitichitamani are meant to teach morals and good behavior. According to K. S. Umpathy (1981):

> In spite of its didactic tone, Nitichitamani captured the hearts of children for several decades, and has gone through 31 editions, a record indeed in this part of the world. It was also used in schools as a textbook of morals. (p. 436)

Like this youth literature in Karnataka in India, youth literature in Greece is beginning to have international attention. According to Nist (1981), "in 1979, Greek children's literature was on display in the exhibition room (of the International Youth Library), accompanied by the first major catalog of that country's youth books" (p. 33), (italics mine).

Another theme worthy of mention in youth literature is that of death. Like American culture, Nigerian culture tends to spare children a knowledge of dreadful death. Should this really be the case? Carolyn Carmichael (1976) asserts, "When speaking of the subject of death in literature for young adults, we are not dealing with a strictly 'vicarious' experience, but rather one which is an inevitable reality" (p. 83).

Emecheta's The Bride Price, Adewoye's The Betrayer, and Ike's Toads for Supper bluntly confront the young adult with death.

> Reaction to death is the theme that is most commonly discussed in the majority of books that have been written for the adolescent reader. The deaths may have occurred around any number of circumstances, but the thrust of most of these books is that of the impact of death. (Carmichael, 1976, p. 85)

In Ike's Toads for Supper, Amadi witnesses his father's death, and its impact on him is immense, especially as it is the first significant death he has met in life. The death of his father transforms Amadi from an exuberant youngster into a reflective young man. His grand design for his father when he completes his college studies fades away with his father's death. Although he weeps profusely over his father's demise, he gradually learns to keep back his tears. Amadi's drastic change into a reflective responsible youth is best described by the author:

> Amadi had been mentally unprepared for his sudden metamorphosis from a carefree undergraduate to a father to his younger dependents, and a son-cum-husband to his mother. He had no choice. (p. 181)

Accordingly, before he leaves for college, Amadi inquires about his father's property, insures that his younger brothers and sisters will continue their schooling, and makes sure that his father's farm work will not end with his father's death, being quite aware that it will definitely provide for his mother while he is still a student.

In Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price, Chike's reaction to Aku-nna's death is not exploited. However, his helplessly holding Aku-nna at her dying moment indicates his acceptance of the finality of death: "He knew she was gone. But he still held her, tenderly but closely to his heart" (p. 167). In Sam Adewoye's The Betrayer, Olayemi's reaction to his parents' death when he finally returns from Britain is based on his sudden realization of the finality of death. Subsequently his academic achievement seems empty and he condemns himself as a failure:

> I have lost everything. That is why my academic achievement means nothing to me. I lost my parents . . . I have failed myself and my people. (p. 104)

Like Emecheta's The Bride Price, Adewoye's The Betrayer, and Ike's Toads for Supper, the German youth novel, Irina Korschunow's Die Sache mit Christoph (published in America as Who Killed Christopher?) deals with how an adolescent boy learns to cope with the fact and reality of death. Christoph, who has been having problems at home and at school, dies in a traffic accident. Christoph's girlfriend, Ulrike, and his good friend, Markus, wonder if the accident was completely real or if Christoph has been anticipating it. In pondering over the death of his friend, Markus increases his knowledge of himself and steadily becomes aware of his environment. Death itself is not really the important thing in the aforementioned four novels, but its impact on youths. Coping with the fact of death is a task which youths may go through sometime in life. This similarity in youths' experience of the fact of death is also similar to their experience of needing to be loved as evidenced in Bette Greene's Summer of My German Soldier, an American junior novel, and Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price, a Nigerian junior novel. The protagonists of both novels are girls in their early adolescence: Aku-nna, a Nigerian in Emecheta's The Bride Price, is thirteen at the beginning of the story, and Patty Bergen, a Jew in Greene's Summer of My German Soldier, is twelve. Both Aku-nna and Patty long for love and company and from this common desperate need, the novels get their strength. Aku-nna, who loses her father at thirteen, is lonely in her Uncle Okonkwo's home in Ibuzza:

> She had lost her father. Her mother was literally lost to her, so deeply was Ma engulfed in the affairs of Okonkwo's household; it was difficult sometimes to remember that she had been married to Aku-nna's father. Her brother was too young, too spoiled to be any consolation to her. . . . It came to Aku-nna clearly now that she was completely alone. (p. 89)

In desperation, she begins to fall steadily in love with an African social outcast, "Osu." Like Aku-nna, Patty experiences the pinch of loneliness in her Jewish parents' home in Jenkinsville, Arkansas. Her father does not want her to play with Freddy Dowd, one of the neighborhood children. She longs to join the company of Edna Louise, Juanita Henkins, Mary Sue Joiner, and Donna Rhodes, and go with them to a Christian gathering at the Baptist Camp in the Ozarks, but her mother refuses permission. Her passionate appeal falls on her mother's "deaf" ears:

> I asked my mother if I promised (cross my heart) not to sing those songs and only to pretend to listen when they talked about Him. "After all," I pleaded, "Jesus isn't contagious." But she said, "No—It's only for Baptists." (pp. 44-49)

In the absence of company, Jenkinsville, Arkansas to Patty Bergen, is a "flat and fried bit of earth." It is in such a lonely situation that she meets Anton, an escaped German prisoner of war, and falls in love with him. But how can one imagine any relationship between a Jewish girl and a German soldier during World War II when feelings of patriotism were at their peak? Similarly, how can one expect any relationship between a freeborn girl like Aku-nna and a descendant of an Osu (outcast dedicated to some African gods) like Chike? The German soldier, Anton, and Chike are not looked on favorably in Jenkinsville, Arkansas, and Ibuzza respectively. But Patty and Aku-nna find that these social outcasts provide the love and care which they need in their period of emotional depression.

Jide Oguntoye's Too Cold for Comfort from Nigeria depicts the stressful transition which most young adults all over the world go through early in their marriage. Kolade Omola who begins to see his matrimonial home in terms of an enclosed state as a result of Hanna's frigidity in sexual matters, dashes out with a briefcase in a fit of anger:

> Suddenly Kolande grabbed the briefcase and dashed out in a frenzy, grumbling: My bedtime shan't be sermon time any more. If she goes on this way, she has to go . . . out of my life somehow. (p. 43) (italics mine)

Is Kolade's experience not basically the same as July's in Ann Head's Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones? July, who begins to see her matrimonial home in terms of an enclosed state, also dashes out of her home:

> I began to feel as though the apartment walls were closing in on me, and when I looked at the windows I could almost see the bars. I dashed out of the door and down the steps and across the garden to Hatty Barnes. (p. 93 (italics mine)

Both Kolade and July initially go through a period of bliss in their relationship before marriage, a period of stress early in their marriage, and finally, a period of understanding of what marriage is.

Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price (Nigerian), Rudolf Herfurtner's Hard Rock (German), and Dagmar Chidolue's Fieber oder der Abschied der Gabriele Kupinski ("Fever on the Farewell of Gabriele Kupinski") present young adults in search of their identity and their future. In more specific terms, Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price and Bette Greene's Summer of My German Soldier reveal the mind and character of two adolescent girls—Aku-nna and Patty—who because of their common desperate need for love or companionship go against age-old custom and traditional practices of their respective communities and experience some pain in the process.

As more studies and research are done, and as we live to learn more, international youth literature may be accorded a place in the classroom. It is gratifying at this time that the International Youth Library pays quite an attention to new developments in junior literature in various countries.

> The Library came from the vision of those who seek, as Scherf says, "to bring children to deep understanding of what the nations have in common and of the common goals in our world." (Nist, 1981, p. 33)

The use of a body of good international junior novels in the classroom provides a means of communication between youths from different cultures and helps us to lay the foundation for international understanding which mankind is presently in dire need of.

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SPYCRAFT: A STUDY OF SPIES AND COUNTER-SPIES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Marie J. Wittek

As a literary genre, the spy story has come of age. Gone are the tacky contrived experiences of super wiz people, heroic figures cut of stone, and villains of fiendish energy. We, as educators and readers, have come to realize and perhaps respect the "new spy." Publishers claim that spy novels account for 60% of fiction reading—paperbook variety, and 30% of hard cover. The question that comes to mind is—are we, educators, aware of this interest among our students? I suspect not, because usually we never ask, and they never volunteer. The purpose of this paper is to examine the spy novel for consideration as a curriculum item, a project for English literature class, and/or leisure time reading for our students and ourselves. I will consider several aspects of the novel.

In American history, the only spy who merits attention is Nathan Hale. Of course, his story was not fiction. But it is the story that legends are made of. As school teachers, when the day gets long and mundane, and we feel that we are taken for granted, we can secretly delight, in our heart of hearts, in the story of a young school-master who gave his life for America. But back to the world of words.

For a very long time, Americans held spies in low esteem, and our literature reflects this view. When President John Kennedy was photographed carrying one of Ian Fleming's James Bond books it became legitimatized reading. James Bond—the epitome of smooth sophisticates of the British Secret Service—provides an excellent fantasy world for adolescents and adults wishing to escape the ho-hum of life. At this point, I believe that it is important to differentiate between spy stories. Bond stories thrill and intrigue us with unique hardware, jet-set living, and posh clothes. The plot is so outrageous as to be forgotten easily enough even by the main characters, and the ending is highly predictable. The Villains will be torn asunder, and the hero will settle in for a week's vacation with the local lovely lass. The "other" spy story presents the rather pedestrian spy, stripped of all but the essential ideals, going about his work in a fashion less to excite, more to puzzle, within the confines of a careful plot, whose end is less than predictable, even at times offensive to the sensitive reader. We, the readers, want a re-assortment of fates for the characters, and we protest at times the severity of their doom. The Bond stories and clone-like Bond stories have a cartoon quality. Larger than life, colored green and red, no real beginning or ending. The "other" spy story is a finely crafted web where the reader seeks the elusive thread and is truly immersed in the personality and persona of the spy during the story.

At this point I would comment on the several semi-spy type novelists. Jack Higgins (The Eagle Has Landed) writes mainly of the commando raids, the stupidity and courage of both sides, and the hopelessness of trying to demonstrate personal integrity in the midst of crisis. He presents his characters with their case histories showing. Ken Follett (Eye of the Needle) writes of the lone assassin who may or may

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not be a spy, who usually falls in love and tries desperately to kill the loved one. His characters are full of quirks and are presented as minor case histories. The best scenes are the chase one, where everyone becomes exhausted, even the reader. These spy stories reflect the interest of readers in the myths of intelligence services of World War II. The plots have a familiar ring, since major events are precisely dated. The invasion of Europe, the death of Hitler, the end of the War—these dates are known to all.

The O.S.S. is in all these novels—not our O.S.S., but what William Buckley calls the "obligatory sex scene."

It will be of interest to a future literary historian that found in the spy literature of a nation at any given time is the current "enemy." In American and British spy novels there has been a changing pattern from Nazi, to Russian, to Chinese, to the present day enemy. Stereotypes abound in these dated stories on both sides. Now to turn our attention to the major focus of this paper—the spy novel as written by John Le Carre. From the lesser lights in the spy world, I have selected Le Carre as the point of departure. He has created and peopled a world of intelligence people, British, Russian, American. His personal particulars are the following: John Le Carre is the pseudonym of David Cornwall. Born in 1931, he attended the universities of Berne and Oxford, taught at Eton, and later entered the British Foreign Service. He has been described recently in The New York Times as belonging to the select company of such spy and detective story writers as Arthur Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Ross McDonald. His first two novels were Call for the Dead (1961) and A Murder of Quality (1962). His third novel, The Spy Who Came In From the Cold (1963), was greeted with great enthusiasm and secured his worldwide reputation. Le Carre is also the author of The Naive and Sentimental Lover, The Looking-glass War, A Small Town in Germany, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, The Honorable Schoolboy, and Smiley's People.

Le Carre, in an interview on Channel 13, November 1980, said that all spy stories must be stories of betrayals. The spy cannot have any loyalty except to his country. Le Carre could not use his own name because the British Foreign Office forbids its staff to publish under their own names. He adopted the name Le Carre (French for "the square") which he claims to have seen printed on a London shop window. He wrote in 1978 that "When I first began writing, Ian Fleming was riding high and the picture of the spy was that of a character who could have affairs with women, drive a fast car, who used gadgetry and gimmickry to escape." The Spy Who Came In From the Cold changed forever the popular view of the spy and his world. The antihero, Alex Leamas, a cold-war spy is a world weary civil servant who sets out to rescue friends from Berlin. He becomes the Willy Loman of the spy world. A minor character in this novel, George Smiley takes charge in later novels. Le Carre lovingly paints and repaints this favored character in shades of muted tones. Smiley is the direct antithesis of Bond. The point should be made that at critical points in his novels Le Carre's stories strongly follow the life and times of Kim Philby, the real British mole. Le Carre neither defends nor denies the similarities.

I will divide my consideration of Le Carre work into three aspects: plot, characters, and atmosphere. Plot of his novels, especially the beginnings, seem to be fragments of broken china, bit by bit put together by a master artisan. For example, in Smiley's People a fatal mugging of a senior citizen in Britain and a terrified Russian mother in Paris start a chain reaction which leads to the final confrontation between Smiley and his arch enemy Karla. In Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, the replacement of a French teacher in a shabby British prep school, who in the words of Le Carre, "Was a poor white of the teaching community" starts at the mid-point of a search and exposure of a mole—a Soviet double agent who has reached the top levels of British Intelligence. In this book, the mystery of the identity of the mole is so compelling that it becomes a matter of reader honor not to peep.

Le Carre plots are a pleasure to the devotee of spy novels but can at times be too difficult to follow for the casual reader. Sustained interest and the comfortable security of reading a well-constructed piece of prose reward the reader who recognizes the master touch. Details are woven together in a fine mesh, clothing the characters and the atmosphere of each novel. Not a spare word or extra sigh does the reader get or expect when reading Le Carre books.

Characters Le Carre's favored character George Smiley is a middle-aged man, heavy set, expensively but poorly dressed, thick glasses, soft voice, highly intelligent, a scholar spy, recruited in youth, disillusioned in mid-age, personally courageous, professional spy, spy master, colleague to some, friend to none, cuckold husband who knows and adores his flagrantly unfaithful wife Ann. He pities the weak, hunts the disloyal, respects the strong, and remembers all. He is most memorable when he finally wins over his mortal enemy Karla in Smiley's People. "From long habit, Smiley had taken off his spectacles and was absently polishing them on the fat end of his tie, even though he had to delve for it among the folds of his tweed coat. 'George, you son.' said Gillam, as they walked slowly toward the car. 'Did I?' said Smiley. 'Yes, yes, well I suppose I did.'" Smiley is described in A Murder of Quality by another character: "Looks like a frog, dresses like a bookie, and has a brain I would give my soul for." Perhaps, Le Carre best describes the way he creates his character when he writes in Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, "Smiley shrugged it all aside, distrustful as ever of the standard shapes of human motive. He settled instead for a picture of one of those Russian dolls that open up, revealing one person inside the other, and another inside him."

Minor characters are fully drawn and the reader looks forward to meeting them again in the next novel. Toby Esterhose, one layer perfect prototype of the British civil servant, another layer a bitter Hungarian who wishes all and gets less than his share. Miss Connie Sachs, brilliant old agent who has total recall of missions and dead people but who forgets the number of bottles she has finished in one evening.

One of the most winning characters is Bill Haydon. The reader likes, even admires him, resents Le Carre's judgment of him. He should be a hero, but he is not. Peter Gullium, the young agent who is on the verge of a serious burn-out, keeps the faith and helps ferret out the mole. All of his characters live and breathe and at times, unfortunately die and do not go to heaven. Le Carre's use of language gives his characters the opportunity to step off the page and into the consciousness of the reader. We know George Smiley, we have met Ann, we hope to meet Peter Gulliam again.

Atmosphere LeCArre constructs the feel of the books and he is effective in surrounding his characters and immersing the settings. In the Honorable School Boy all is warm, sun-drenched, Greek Isles, Hong Kong in summer, light clothing, sun hats, umbrellas, fishing boats and slow cars. In Small Town in Germany the city of Bonn is damp, cloudy, engulfed in mists, shrouded as in a tomb. In Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy the urbane quicker pace of the city of london forces the tempo of the book.

In conclusion, the spy novel merits the attention of readers, teachers and students who love a mystery; and who doesn't.

Now, how to teach this type of literature to high school students? I suspect, to build interest and appeal, book jackets of spy stories should be displayed around the classroom. Class discussions of types of spy stories could be held at this point. The "hot" war-time spy story certainly differs from the "cold war" spy story. Specific spy stories can be read and reported on by a committee of students to the whole class. Short scenes from spy stories can be prepared and acted in front of a class or school assembly. The librarian is a key person in securing materials for the students and should be invited to serve as a resource person for this project.

Since there are several ways to teach this type of literature I will suggest one that I have found effective. Plots of spy stories can be examined by a group of class critics for merits and demerits in contruction of plot. Plot diagrams can be drawn by the teacher and students, the craft of the authors can be evaluated in terms of suspense and appeal to the reader. Were all the questions answered by the author? Did he/she leave "loose-ends" by accident or design? Which segments of the spy stories are of critical interest to the reader? Where did the author fail to hold the attention of the reader?

In this particular section, it is critical for the students to understand fully the concept of plot and its importance in the spy story. When the student relates what happens when, he/she should be alerted that in a spy story, it must happen for a reason that may or may not be apparent immediately to the reader.

Perhaps a more elaborate staging is needed in certain English classes. For this type of class, review committees of students can be constituted to act as heads of intelligence services and evaluate past experiences of their own services or the opposition. Small groups of volunteer students read and report on plots of spy stories, divided into master spy groups. One group reports on Bond, another group reports on Smiley. The class functions as a review committee to find favor or disfavor with the adventures of either master spy. To carry this activity one step further, either committee might make recommendations on how to foil the enemy next time.

Language in a spy story is of paramount importance and provides the teacher with a golden opportunity to explore levels of word meanings with the class. The occupational jargon of the spy world can be recorded and decoded by class members. Quite ordinary words such as "handwriting," "listeners," "control," and "janitor" translate to specific spy mode of operation, electronic eavesdroppers, spy master and security unit in intelligence services. Students can be motivated to draw up a list of words used in spy craft with translations. Writing up spy reports using this occupational jargon can be fun and rewarding for the students and teacher. Here are a few words to start—"housekeeper," "branch," "line," "parish," "lamplighter," "stock," "legend," and "burned."

We, as educators, must keep ourselves refreshed and involved in new curriculum in order to provide the necessary spark for our students.

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A RATIONALE FOR TEACHING REGIONAL LITERATURE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Christopher Gould

These are not the most propitious times for recommending new courses in literature. With journalists, politicians, and many parents insisting that English teachers ought to restrict their attention to the fundamentals of literacy, a proposed course offering in regional literature is likely to be dismissed as a curricular frill. That is, unless such a proposal can be documented with convincing evidence that the study of regional literature contributes directly to reading and writing skills. Having helped to establish a new center for regional study in western Oklahoma, I have worked with other teachers in discovering the kind of evidence that provides a persuasive rationale for a course offering.

An effective course proposal, naturally, will specify instructional objectives and provide a theoretically sound strategy for achieving them. Pragmatism, if nothing else, dictates that the most prominent objectives for any proposed English course should include accepted criteria of literacy. But before settling on any one theoretical foundation, an English teacher must sort out conflicting claims of cognitive psychologists, linguists, and a host of other educational experts, most of whom have plausible explanations for how children and adolescents learn to read and write. Although no single theory has achieved undisputed hegemony in English study, most prominent theorists have their advocates in educational journals and textbooks. The following list of four basic approaches to teaching literacy is by no means a definitive taxonomy, but it does cover most of the waterfront of English study in the eighties.

Me-English. Articulated eloquently by Ken Macrorie, Me-English emphasizes the humane ideals—chiefly reverence for the individual—of traditional liberal education. Freewriting exercises assume that whenever students are encouraged to compose assignments about topics of personal interest and concern, most mechanical deficiencies will take care of themselves. Me-English has been a tempting target for persons committed to a return to "basics," while more scholarly critics have faulted freewriting for its neglect of audience analysis.

Lit-English. Mimetic in theory, Lit-English usually is taught with an anthology of "prose models." It has been accused of producing what one recent critic calls "imitative literacy," defined as "the thoughtless aping of institutional and adult language," as opposed to "literacy in the true sense [which] is the ability to think and express in speech and print complex analytical and critical thoughts."[1]

Error-English. Error-English has produced the most familiar stereotypes of English instruction—preoccupation with prescriptions about usage, many of which are belied by passages from acknowledged masters of prose. Relying on a grammar handbook, Error-English separates language from thought. Despite persistent evidence that schooling in formal grammar does not typically improve writing skills, however, Error-English seems to have been resurrected in the search for easy answers to declining literacy.

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Culture-English. Taught primarily to college freshmen, Culture-English derives from the renewed interest in classical rhetoric. Developing concurrently with Me-English, Culture-English, in contrast, subordinates individual self-expression to audience adaptation. Although it better accommodates critical thinking and provides motivation for the mastery of conventional usage, Culture-English has been accused of legitimatizing bureaucratic indifference to the individual.[2] And although it has demystified stages of the writing process--invention, in particular--Culture-English has been criticized for mechanistic approaches.[3]

The four pedagogies sketched above are contradictory at least in emphasis, and since none can claim a consensus, mainstream textbooks, as a rule, do not reflect uniformly any single approach. Consequently, the responsibility for defining the objectives of instruction in literacy rests to a large extent on the individual English teacher. Drawing from the virtues of each of the four pedagogies, I wish to propose a reasonable set of objectives and then to show how each can be met in a course in regional literature: critical thinking skills; reading skills; effective use of language, including mastery of conventional grammar and sensitivity to variations in levels of usage; and self-esteem deriving from respect for one's own culture as well as the cultures of others.

Critical Thinking Skills. Ira Shor defines critical thinking as "extraordinarily re-experiencing the ordinary," a process by which "the enveloping realm of the routine is extracted from its habitual foundations." Shor places these general goals closer to actual practice by suggesting that "cognitive skills--reading, writing, comprehension, laboratory techniques, etc.--will be developed through a problematic examination of a real context, drawn from student life."[4] At first glance, such appeals to the individual student's interest and personal concerns sounds like pure Me-English, but Shor's instructional practices in an urban university classroom are much more sophisticated. For example, students examine and analyze a familiar item of junk food ("a fried piece of dead beef"), considering its composition, its production and delivery through exchanges in commodities, its marketing, and so forth. The resulting critical thought clearly accommodates the need for cross-disciplinary learning.

Regional studies, likewise, can stimulate interdisciplinary critical examination of everyday life--a fact already demonstrated by the Foxfire projects. But more specifically, the literature of almost any region can provoke critical discussions of setting, dialect, allusions, and, most importantly, stereotypes. A series of articles in a recent issue of English in Texas suggests approaches to the popular western novel. On the simplest of levels, a teacher can generate discussions which evaluate the accuracy of setting (including flora, fauna, and minerals), the descriptions of regional and ethnic customs, the prevalence of occupational stereotypes, and so forth. Again, the result can be interdisciplinary critical thought.

A second description of the cognitive activities which accompany critical thought in all disciplines is found in Peter Elbow's "believing game" and "doubting game."[5] In the first instance, a reader tries to construct circumstances under which a particular assertion might be true or valid. The doubting game, on the other hand, engages the reader in posing questions, discovering contradictions, or thinking of counter examples or explanations. Working with Elbow's terms, Lee Odell has listed "a powerful set of procedures that, despite their simplicity, can provoke a great variety of questions with which we can examine any subject matter in any discipline." These procedures include the following:

> Contrast: How is X different from Y (in data at hand; in other data we know about)? . . . Classification: How can we label

> X? What is it similar to in our personal experience? . . . Change: Has X changed? What is it becoming? What could it never become? . . . Location in a sequence: When does X occur? What is the historical setting for X? . . . Location in physical context: Where does X appear? What is its relationship to its surroundings?[6]

Most regional literature provides a wealth of opportunities for addressing such kinds of questions, but most importantly it is comprised of subject matter sufficiently familiar to most students to stimulate the doubting and believing games. This is decidedly an advantage regional literature enjoys over many of the classics of the elite literary canon.

Reading Skills. Although it is axiomatic that students will read more of what they enjoy, there are sounder theoretical justifications for teaching regional literature. Researchers now believe that reading does not consist of the simple translation or decoding of written symbols, whereby a reader is more or less successful in reconstructing an objective meaning of the author's creation. Rather, reading now is commonly viewed as an active intellectual process of creating meaning from written texts. It is assumed, further, that fairly complex thinking skills must precede the acquisition of reading proficiency; and some educational theorists even have suggested that students should not be taught reading until age eight, when presumably they have developed the necessary cognitive maturity.[7] One theory of reading holds, more specifically, that readers are engaged continually in a series of educated guesses trying to anticipate what will follow from each portion of a text; as readers become more skillful, they also become more proficient in making spontaneous predictions. In an exercise which is based on this particular theory, I have shown students installments of the syndicated cartoon strip, "Apartment 3-G," a series which employs virtually every stereotype of the television soap opera. On short weekly writing assignments, students, familiar with the conventions of the genre, try to make predictions about what will happen in subsequent episodes. As time passes, most students improve the accuracy of their predictions because their attention to detail, along with their critical faculties, has sharpened; as a result, so have their reading skills.

The relation to regional literature simply is that those features of, say, the western novel that diminish its stature in comparison to the classics of elite literature (its formulaic structure, stereotypes, etc.) are the very things that make it most suitable to developing readers, provided that they are encouraged to approach it critically (for which one should not read "disparagingly").

Study of Language and Grammar. Although few are prepared to pronounce it a panacea, sentence-combining has offered an alternative to primitive Error-English by providing the occasion to consider the possible effects of saying the same thing in different ways. Readers of regional literature, similarly, can examine dialect and levels of usage and the ways that they influence the perception of character. One of the few grammar exercises from grade school which I can recall vividly involved the reading of Tom Sawyer. My classmates and I transformed examples of Huck's dialect into the elite usage preferred by Aunt Polly. Although the exercise (at least twenty-five years old) now seems a little crude, its theoretical basis remains sound—the principle that no one standard of usage is correct, that language reflects social contexts and probably shapes the responses of those who hear or read it.

Self-Esteem. Probably no one would argue that regional literature should be the foundation of an English curriculum. Inevitably students should encounter popular and elite Anglo-American classics, and ideally they should be introduced to the cultures of minorities and of other continents. Regional literature should be taught alongside the acknowledged classics of mainstream culture as well as the writing of minority and third-world authors. Only when there is a hierarchy, implicit or explicit, are students encouraged either to diminish their own cultural heritage or self-defensively to turn off to "good literature."

Although the present climate in education is not especially receptive to new courses in literature, a regional studies course need not be dismissed as another fad which lacks serious planning and sufficient rigor. There is substantial evidence that such a course belongs in the English curriculum.

NOTES

[1] Leon Botstein, "Imitative Literacy," Partisan Review, 48 (1981), 406-407.

[2] See, for example, Richard Ohmann, English in America: A Radical View of the Profession (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[3] See, for example, Kristin R. Woolever, "Is Writing a Technical Skill or a Means of Humanistic Inquiry?" The Chronicle of Higher Education, 20 July 1981, p. 40.

[4] Ira Shor, Critical Teaching and Everyday Life (Boston: South End Press, 1980), pp. 93, 104.

[5] Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 147-191.

[6] Lee Odell, "Teaching Writing by Teaching the Process of Discovery: An Interdisciplinary Enterprise," in Cognitive Processes in Writing, ed. Lee W. Gregg and Erwin R. Steinberg (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980), p. 146.

[7] See Kenneth Reeder, "Language and Thinking: Futurescapes for the Teaching of Writing," English Education, 14 (1982), 18-33.

YET ANOTHER VERSION OF PASTORAL: HAL BORLAND'S WHEN THE LEGENDS DIE

Dennis Walsh

Eight years ago I first encountered Borland's When the Legends Die[1] at the Tuba City High School on the Navajo Reservation. It was being widely and successfully taught to senior high students, Navajos (mostly), Hopis, blacks, and whites. I believe the book is still being used importantly in conjunction with the Richard Widmark (as Red Dillon) movie version. I have since taught the book in a graduate seminar (Reading and Adolescent Literature) where all of my students were themselves teachers in high school, junior college, or four-year college. Legends was generally the best received of all the books we examined. In brief, I have long been pleasantly astonished at the reception of Legends by both students and teachers. I wish to set out here some reasons, both broadly cultural and specifically literary, why books like Borland's should be taught as part of a humanistic pedagogy, but why Legends in particular cannot be read as a totally realistic work. Instead, it is akin to myth and legend, and I suspect it is this level of meaning that justifies its continuing popularity.

A paramount reason for teaching literature about and by American minorities is stated by Sheila Schwartz, a nationally prominent English educator: to "give students insight into many ethnic groups."[2] Schwartz's approach to teaching fiction at the introductory level is bibliotherapeutic, a continuation of the "hooked on books" paperback revolution and a modern ancestor of an ancient moralist pedagogy. At this level she is opposed to the "classics" approach wherein students seldom find "reflections of their own, real problems" and "communion with the human race" (p. 2). In this student-centered approach to teaching literature at a basic level, the reading of minority literature should cause one to ask the following questions:

> How can individuals come to terms with their own group identity? What are the problems of extolling or denying, ignoring or being ignorant of, one's cultural past as seen through family and/or group (Black, Chicano, Jew, American Indian, etc.)? How have minorities been helped or hurt in the United States? How have the positions of minorities improved or remained in this last quarter of the twentieth century? Why is the mosaic or pluralistic image of Americans a better or more realistic one than the melting pot metaphor of the past? What are the present and future for deprived ethnic minorities? How does an understanding of these circumstances benefit all Americans?[3]

In this approach designed to lessen "racial and religious prejudice" and stereotyping, Schwartz would have us study Borland's novel in "both social and psychological terms."

> Indian psychology is intimately connected with nature: Everything springs from and returns to nature, and to live in harmony with nature and within yourself is the Ideal. Borland, a great nature writer, describes how Indian culture is expressed through nature (pp. 75-76).

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Other topics of classroom interest are deliberate B. I. A. attempts to crush Indian culture by forcing children to leave their families, rodeo cruelty to animals vs. traditional Indian reverence, the mutual distrust in white culture, exploitation of Indians in the white world, and specifically Tom's change from "a whole person in harmony with nature into a violent man, a killer of animals" (p. 76). Though much of this emphasizes the negative, Schwartz is more interested in readers being uplifted by Borland's novel—chiefly via Tom's ability to regenerate himself by disposing of the painful aspects of his past and discovering his own proud inheritance. Schwartz's main purpose in teaching Legends is to study Native American cultural values; this becomes a means to examine dominant American values in a penetrating way, to know oneself in relation to those values, and perhaps to seek regeneration and harmony. Finally, then, this admirable purpose seems to me to reach into the profound and ancient Socratic part of our heritage.

Frederick Turner III would find Schwartz guilty of a new kind of stereotyping. My speculation about Turner is based on his remarks in the Introduction to his Indian Reader[4] where he first speaks of why we should read literature about Indians: we are "a divided and deeply troubled nation streaked with racial, sectional, and class antagonisms, uncertain of its global position, morally enfeebled. The roots of this all lie buried in our past" (p. 7). Further, Turner is not the first to observe that we have as a nation "no real belief in the past and its ability to shape actions and events in the present." Our sense of the past is "rigorously selective and thus almost wholly fictional." Hence, "many of the actions that have made up the American experience have been misguided and uninformed" (p. 5). One way to learn more about the historical realities of our nation is to study Indian tales and myths to "get a sense of the way the world seemed, the way it looked and felt and smelled to the original inhabitants of these lands before the white man began his irresistible intrusion." We need to construct an "accurate portrait of the Indian," see him as he saw himself and as others saw him. When the Legends Die is valuable for these reasons, but I believe we must read it essentially as myth or legend to avoid the trap Schwartz falls into.

Turner asserts that in order to "free ourselves" we must rid ourselves of the familiar stereotypes of the Indian as skulking savage and also of the more recently dominant image of him as noble redman, the original ecologist, a natural democrat and even communist, a non-aggressive, non-competitive wiseman. While partly true, these new stereotypes are another way of avoiding the humanness and diversity of the Native American, the fact that when one speaks of the North American Indian, "one is dealing with hundreds of tribes speaking perhaps as many as a thousand mutually unintelligible tongues, and differing in cultures from sedentary agriculturalists to nomadic hunters, from tribal confederacies to wandering bands, from nations as large as twenty thousand to one hardly more than one hundred" (p. 11).

As for the image of the Indian as ecologist, to survive he had to have a "deep feeling for terrain and climate," and "the idea of waste was simply not a possible mental occurrence to the Indian, since tribal existence was often at little more than a subsistence level and was occasionally less than that." However, "it is also true that when the Plains tribes acquired the horse and the gun from the whites their killing of game began gradually to exceed their needs" (p. 11). It should not surprise us that with technology the Indian would be as wasteful as humans everywhere are, given the occasion. His role as ecologist seems to have been due less to innate virtue or a Rousseauian connection with nature than to lack of technology.

The matter of the image of Indian life as communal, non-aggressive, noncompetitive, full of tolerance and wisdom, bears close scrutiny by Turner. It is again no surprise to find Indians very human. Disposing of these "new" stereotypes, Turner concludes with the following:

> . . . the Indian lived a life saturated with violence, pocked by acts of cruelty to enemies, characterized in good measure by ethnocentrism, male chauvinism, and severe deprivation; he fought, tortured, owned slaves, lusted after glory and recognition, died; but he never lost sight of the fact that all of this was distinctively, essentially, radically human, that he was human and thus a part of the universal community of the living. [Italics are Turner's] Perhaps this is as good a definition of wisdom and earthly happiness as any (p. 15).

Judged in terms of formal realism and accurate views of traditional Indian life, Borland's novel does not hold up well. However, judged as legend or myth, and also as simply a well wrought, cleverly paced tale, it is indeed worthy of continued examination.

Nora Baker Barry, in "The Bear's Son Folk Tale in When the Legends Die and House Made of Dawn,"[4] approaches Legends from an archetypal point of view, comparing it in a limited way to the Pulitzer Prize winning Momaday novel. "Borland's novel conforms more explicitly to the folk tale sequence than does Momaday's work" (p. 276). The bear's son folk tale is central to such oral tradition literature as Beowulf and the Grettis Sage and is "embedded in contemporary novels where the protagonist is connected to a heroic cultural background" (p. 275).

Barry describes the traditional elements of the folk tale—"The hero is raised by bears. . . . II. Strength and adventures. . . III. Two struggles with supernatural foes"—and then traces the way in which Legends represents the tale. After his parents' death, Tom journeys

> even further into an even more primitive state in a symbolic journey that traces man's important spiritual and physical connection with nature. . . . Borland then leads Tom on a painful journey to an industrial society. . . . The struggles of these modern heroes are internal psychological ones. Tom is his own enemy. The demons he destroys are personal ones. . . . In accepting his true Ute nature, Tom Black Bull becomes whole. He does not return to become Bear's Brother, for he must live in the White Man's world. Unlike most Bear's Son types, Tom's triumph is comedic in that he lives through a crisis of self. . . . Structurally, the folk tale adds depth and universality to Tom's individual struggle and makes him at once a real man and a legendary, symbolic figure (pp. 278-280).

The universal level of meaning in Legends gives added justification for teaching and reading the novel, and the legendary and figurative quality perhaps compensates for what some readers, judging the work as "realistic," see as improbabilities.

In some ways it is more revealing to compare Tom Black Bull with the romantic child of Wordsworth or Dickens than with Abel in House Made of Dawn—and to regard Borland as a nature writer in a pastoral tradition than as an expert on Native Americans. We find Tom early in the novel living a prelapsarian existence, in harmony with nature and far from the evils of civilized man. Tom is moved irresistibly, almost as an object, into the fragmented, greedy, industrialized modern world. Here Red Dillon is his Fagin. New York, like London in Oliver Twist, is Babylon, at opposite poles from the Edenic Horse Mountain. In New York the shattering of Tom's body is emblematic of the City of Destruction, characterized by moral fragmentation, hatred, dissonance of every kind. The novel ends with a scarred Tom retreating to pastoral harmony. The pastoral myth in Legends is a way for us to reconcile a widely cherished dream of the way life should be with our perception of what it really is. In particular, it is a means of coping with the anti-traditional, materialistic, urban, industrialized society in which most of us live. Comprehension of this figural level, like the bear's son folk tale Barry describes, deepens our perception of the novel. The confusion arises when the reader insists on a formally realistic interpretation, as does Shelia Schwartz.

Borland's dream of pastoral harmony is most evident in Part I, entitled "Bessie." Tom's mother is the central figure in this section at the realistic level as she is the one who recalls the old ways to her husband and urges him to follow them. After George's death, Tom, having digested male roles from his father, learns from her how to perform the women's traditional activities such as basket-weaving and food preservation. At the mythic level she becomes the All-Mother, the female repository of faith, whose memory allows Tom to bind together body and spirit at the end of the novel.

The escape to Horse Mountain by the Black Bulls is not merely a means of avoiding punishment for the murder of Frank No Deer. It is, as well, an escape from cheating white employees, corrupted Indians like Blue Elk, ignorant preachers, and finally from civilization itself, white and Indian. The way the Black Bulls come to live is in some ways the traditional Ute way, particularly in regard to hunting, house-building, preparation of food and clothing. Yet it is naive to assume that Ute families lived in utter isolation away from clan and tribal groups, separated from rivalry and jealousy within those groups, and divorced from the almost constant raiding that went on with rival tribes such as the Apache and Navajo. In short, the harmony with nature and each other (the "roundness") the Black Bulls achieve is partly true to life but is better regarded as an emblem of pastoral harmony than an actual representation of Ute and Native American culture.

Two additional aspects of Part I deserve at least passing attention: the narrative language and the deaths of Bessie and George. The narrative language is clearly meant to approximate the Ute tongue and perhaps oral story-telling style.

> He told the bear cub to come with him, and it came. That is how the boy and the bear cub became brothers and friends. That is how it happened.
>
> After that the boy was not alone (p. 24).

Moreover, this repetitive, assonant language partakes of the "roundness" and harmony of the pastoral dream. It is the language of legend and myth.

As for the death of George by avalanche and that of Bessie by an unnamed illness (likely tuberculosis), at the level of formal realism each would have to be regarded as a deus ex machina. At the mythic level they are part of the harmonious course of nature and result in Tom's deeper affinity with creatures such as the bear cub, the jays, and the squirrels, and in a deeper dependence on nature for sustenance of all kinds. Finally, the deaths lead to the greater "roundness" of the novel whereby Tom is wrenched from his prelapsarian existence in order that he might return to it, wise and weary, at the end of the novel. He resembles the romantic child of Wordsworth's "Intimations" who comes from the God of nature "trailing clouds of glory" and goes full circle back to his maker.

Part II ("The School") is mostly realistic in respect to the description of the school circumstances. However, judged by that standard, even this part, finally, would have to be considered melodrama. Only someone as inexperienced with Indian cultures and the B. I. A. as Schwartz could assume that all of the Bayfield school officials, white and Indian, student and teacher, conspire in a villainous way to extinguish Tom's Rousseauian spark. The omniscient narration that is intensely and subjectively Tom's point of view emphasizes this ubiquitous sense of connivance.

Resembling Oliver Twist, Tom is powerless, moved like an object by forces greater than himself. At the end of Part II, Tom's Fagin, Red Dillon, attractive and villainous, enters the dream. As a result of Red's instruction in bronc riding, Tom will ultimately arrive in New York, the focus of dissonance and destruction.

In several ways Part III ("The Arena") is not believable at the representational level. Tom's utter honesty in regard to Red's "scam" has to be seen in light of his trailing Wordsworthian "clouds of glory," the memory of prelapsarian integrity. Moreover, his spartan eschewing of women and drink are improbable. At the mythic level a main part of his return to pastoral surroundings is a coming to terms with femaleness ("blueness" vs. "blackness") in himself and the universe. At the realistic level, it is preposterous that Tom, virile and attractive, would not encounter and be changed by intimate contact with women. In addition, recently a sophisticated reader insisted to me that Tom's addiction to bronc-killing is so extreme as to be unbelievable at the representational level. Mythically, as "Devil Tom," he is demonically at opposite poles from all harmony and goodness in the universe.

Evading Mary Richmond's gentle invitation to comfort and protection, Tom returns to southern Colorado and the high mountain passes in the final section of the novel ("The Mountains"). This is an escape from civilization resembling that of Wordsworth in "The Prelude" or that of Oliver Twist, though for Oliver the escape is to the heroic solidarity of a small, elect group. Tom goes all the way "back to his beginnings" (p. 183) as an individual and as a universal figure. As in the time of his youth, "Jays came to share his breakfast and chipmunks sat on his knee" (p. 188). Later, in his quest for a return to prelapsarian integrity, he does not shoot the grizzly he has pursued, and he soon discards all of the trappings of civilization. He starts up the mountain to exorcise his devils and to find the All-Mother, to become "part of the earth" (p. 212). It is not likely that a naked man could survive an autumn night (and even rise refreshed in the frost.) in these mountains near the Continental Divide, yet at the mythic level it can be seen as part of the rigorous purification necessary to allow him to return to pastoral harmony. We know he may not stay on Horse Mountain in the future, but we can be sure he will not be far away and that he will always be nourished by the prelapsarian memory.

The main thrust of this paper is that we should read works like Borland's Legends, but we should discriminate between the actual and a different level of reality, the mythic. One must agree with the importance Schwartz places on individuals and groups recognizing and accepting (if not necessarily being proud of) the past in order to find direction and meaning in the present. Understanding the actual circumstances of minorities, here Native Americans, benefits all Americans. Schwartz does not come to terms with the true, diverse circumstances of the first Americans and does not separate reality from dream and myth. Ironically, for her this emphasis on self knowledge results in seeing others inaccurately, in distorting the past, and finally in seeing oneself mendaciously.

Notes

[1] Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*. Philadelphia: Bantam, 1972.

[2] Shelia Schwartz, *Teaching Adolescent Literature* (Rochelle Park, N. J.: Hayden, 1979).

[3] Frederick W. Turner III, ed., *The Portable American Indian Reader* (Kingsport, Tenn.: Viking, 1980).

[4] Nora Baker Barry, "The Bear's Son Folk Tale in *When the Legends Die* and *A House Made of Dawn*," *Western American Literature* (Winter 1979), pp. 275-287.

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NONFICTION: THE ORPHAN OF THE LITERATURE CLASS

Margaret Grove Ferry

The short story, poetry, novel, and drama are the real children of most literature classes. Just as the negative "orphan" is dropped for the more positive "our child" when an adoption takes place, attitudes about the negative term "nonfiction" would change if accepted with success in literature classes. Historian Barbara Tuchman responds to the negative label as follows: "I do not feel like a Non-something. I feel quite specific." She explains further that the writing of nonfiction requires "study, observation, and accumulation of fact." Therefore she reasons that nonfiction should be retermed "real estate" because it deals in the "real estate of man, of human conduct."[1] Belief in the worth of nonfiction must precede its acceptance.

Just as writers select specifics about human conduct and events and write in genres they prefer, individual students can use interests and genre preferences to make selections for their nonfiction reading. Tennis, back packing, solar energy, wood working—these are only a few of the varied interests that individual students bring to our classrooms. Each student interest has been nurtured by investigation, talking, listening, and reading, which are the skills important to English teaching. Shared enthusiasm encourages the guess-what-I-read and I-know-a-book-you-might-enjoy talk in class about reading short stories as well as magazine articles.

What about the tradition of teaching literature, which to most English teachers does not include nonfiction? Is this idea of accepting nonfiction just another fad, gimmick, another one-day panacea in a year that includes more than Mondays? The attitude about accepting and using nonfiction in English does have a tradition of being included in National Council of Teachers of English curriculum reports, which are intended to guide teacher's aims rather than dictate required readings. For example, the importance of student interest is a planning consideration in the 1917 Reorganization of English in the Secondary Schools (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917) where evidence of teachers' concerns with students becoming lifelong readers can be found:

> Unless the pupils feel free to report what they actually like, the teacher is not in a position either to understand them or to help them. He can easily be too austere in his judgment, forgetful of the fact that he is dealing with immature persons who have not yet formed mature taste and who must simply be let to like the best they can understand and appreciate at the stage of progress to which they have arrived.[2]

The committee who wrote the "General Reading" section of the Reorganization Report included a listing of "industrial" reading for boys in order that teachers might match reader interest with suggested fiction and nonfiction reading.

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Subsequent NCTE curriculum commissions have believed in the importance of starting with student interests, leading to class discussion and more reading and writing in English classrooms. The English Language Arts in Secondary Schools (New York: Appleton, 1956), a study and statement on planning curriculum, chaired by Dora V. Smith, included a plan which would begin with student interest, using readings that teachers and students collected to build a bibliography for their class units. The NCTE commission believed that in this way students would benefit:

> In working through a unit, students need to think clearly and logically, to plan under the guidance of the teacher, to assign tasks and to accept responsibility either as individuals or in groups, and to learn such research techniques as use of library reference sources, directed observations and the interview. At the same time, they have opportunity for practicing many forms of speech and writing with direct attention to these skills as the need arises. In a social setting, the students test their powers and have the opportunity to note the results, both as regards the quality of their performance and its effect upon the listener or reader.[3]

The resulting "back country" unit used as a planning guide in English Language Arts in Secondary Schools listed magazine articles, as well as poetry, drama, short stories, and novels, in its sample bibliography. Students, as well as teachers, became resources in classes where communication, and not the text, became the focus of the class. The reading of students was just a beginning. My principles of acceptance in introducing nonfiction to my classes are not new, nor is my assumption that my students are individuals with preferences and interests which can help us all practice the skills of communication in English classes.

The adoption of nonfiction in my classes began with the writing of John McPhee and some common interests that I knew my students and I shared. I was impressed by McPhee's writing, which deals with the "real estate" Tuchman describes, using detailed descriptions, insightful interviews, and topics ranging from canoe building to basketball playing. My enthusiasm about McPhee's writing led me to read every book and article of his I could find. Since I and most of my Arizona students had hiked, camped, or visited the Grand Canyon, and a few of us had boated down the Colorado River through the canyon, I started our common class reading with "Encounters with the Archdruid," part of the paperback collection, The John McPhee Reader (New York: Vintage Press, 1977). The article describes a Colorado River rafting trip made by David Bower, conservationist, and Floyd Dominy, dam builder.

This first common reading exercise would serve as a guide for improvement of student reading, writing, and listening throughout the year. My goal was to have students gain confidence in making connections between these skills as we practiced them as a class, so that they could work in the same way alone. More detailed explanations and examples of the methods I used can be found in Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen's Beat Not the Poor Desk (Montclair, N.J.: Boyton / Cook, 1982) and Ann Berthoff's Forming, Thinking, Writing (Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden, 1978).

I approach my teaching by asking some of the basic questions about the working habits of my students which Berthoff, Ponsot, and Deen deal with: what are the ways that they come to know and get meaning from what they read, write, and talk about? By watching students study in libraries and classrooms, I have observed ways of working that detour them from understanding what they read. Magic markers in hand, they are underliners instead of note takers and jotters. Neat yellow, pink, or mauve squares pattern paperback pages. In English class we practice jotting and note taking, often using the rationale of Ann Berthoff's "constructing and construing" found in part iii of Forming, Thinking, Writing.

Student notebooks are kept by dividing the paper in half, drawing a line down the middle and labeling the left hand side, "notes" or "jottings" and the right hand side, "comments, questions, and responses". The double entry arrangement is the key to an assignment in which students dialogue with their notes. As students read they jot down important fragments, lists, and quotes on the left; after reading they go back and summarize, comment, react, and question the first set of notes to the right. Students are working on learning to read and write critically. These right-hand and / or left-hand entries can be used for the writing of thumbnail sketches, free focused writing, summaries, evaluations, or whatever name is given to that first rough draft reaction to what has been read.

After revision of the first draft, the class is ready to read their papers out loud, listen to each other and make three-minute written-in-class "observations," a way of working on descriptions of good writing. Following the method Rosemary Deen and Marie Ponsot suggest in Beat Not the Poor Desk, little further instruction is given because through listening and writing students will come to an understanding of "observations." Desks are arranged in a circle so students and teacher can write and read together. As we work with written observations after each paper is read out loud, our comments move from the, "I liked your paper. It was good." to the "Your use of specifics fit in with the use of 'controversial' in the first paragraph." I read and write with the students, acknowledging good observations, asking questions at the end of each class to summarize what we've heard, and reading only one observation per student of my own, resisting my inclination to lecture on "the importance of an introduction." Mainly I watch students begin to listen to one another, not just to me, and to realize the variety of forms that good writing can take. As one student commented, "I thought we all had to write introductions the same way."

Next, time is spent listing questions about the content of the article and the way facts were presented by the writer. For example were both sides of an issue presented? Since the McPhee article, "Encounters with an Archdruid," presents a controversy between dam builders in the West and conservationists, and conservationists, the class questions range from the why and how of building dams to the rights of land owners to the meaning of the term "archdruid" in McPhee's title. These questions are the beginning of our class-compiled bibliography, which will include magazine articles and other forms of writing that give us more information on the questions asked.

To find answers and more information about topics in the article, we use the library's Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and the card catalogue to collect five to ten citations per group for our class-compiled bibliography. Titles like Exploration of the Colorado River, written by John Wesley Powell in 1875, Mary Austin's Land of Little Rain, and "Will the Grand Canyon Turn to a Lake of Mud?" a current article in US News show the variety of information and forms of writing that can be found. After the publication of the class bibliography, more investigation and writing can be done or the class can return to The McPhee Reader to chose articles that fit individual interests for more reading and writing.

McPhee's baker's dozen collection contains writing about people, their jobs, and the places they live, combining narrative, conversation, and detailed description that with teacher planning will encourage students to investigate. Occupations from the management of a private school in "The Headmaster" to canoe building in "The Survival of the Birch Bark Canoe" can be the starting places for a class unit on "working." "A Sense of Where You Are" introduces readers to Bill Bradley, Princeton basketball player, while "The Levels of the Game" describes the professional tennis careers of Arthur Ashe and Clark Graebner, the beginning of a class discussion on amateurs and professionals in sports. Science fiction readers will enjoy "The Deltiod Pumpkin Seed" or "The Curve of Binding Energy." A little known New Jersey wilderness is chronicled in "The Pine Barrens"; the swamps of Georgia provide a setting for "Travels in Georgia," making The John McPhee Reader a good place for students from areas other than Arizona to start reading nonfiction.

If you saw an eleventh grade aspiring pilot enjoy "The Deltiod Pumpkin Seed" then this is your chance to suggest a reading of THE RIGHT STUFF, Tom Wolfe's description of 60's astronauts. As student interests begin to define individuals in class, the teacher has the opportunity to suggest other readings. Ann Dillard's Pilgrim at Tinker Creek or Edward Abbey's Abbey's Road for the environmentalists, Joan Didion's The White Album or Sara Davidson's Real Property for the social scientist, or Stephen J. Gould's The Panda's Thumb for the anthropologist are suggested titles that can become invitations with the R.S.V.P.—"Let me know how you liked it."

Along with this spirit of group and class dialogue, I read out loud from my writing in progress during "observation" of writing in class described previously. At one point the class knew that I was struggling with the conclusion for this paper, as I kept asking what the word "family" meant to them. Knowing this, Beth, a hopeful sociology major, shared Families by Jane Howard with me after class. I found the connection I was looking for and another nonfiction reading to adopt in my classes.

In the first chapter Jane Howard describes her investigation of the definition of family, which depends not only on whether the writer is a sociologist or historian, but also on whether the writing was done in the 30's or the 80's. In researching the definitions of others, Howard creates a metaphor of her own to describe the way she feels about families. To her a family is a "prism" where we learn a variety of ways of looking at the world. I would extend this metaphor to our classrooms where we accept nonfiction and methods of working that help students begin to see the full spectrum of from what, from whom, and how we learn.

NOTES

[1] Barbara Tuchman, Practicing History (New York: Knopf, f1981), p. 46.

[2] James Fleming Hosic (editor), Reorganization of English in the Secondary School (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), p. 102.

[3] National Council of Teachers of English, The English Language Arts in the Secondary School (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), p. 70.

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A TEACHER'S ANNOTATED SUBJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES FOR AND ABOUT LESBIAN AND GAY MALE YOUTH

Edward C. Paolella

Within the past few years, there has been a steadily growing need by responsible educators, librarians, parents, counselors, social workers, therapists, and religious groups to find readily available reading materials—often buried, because embedded in larger works—to offer to lesbian and gay male youth. To meet such a need, I have compiled and annotated fifty of the best works on homosexuality and arranged them according to their subject matter for professionals to use as a convenient resource in educating themselves, as well as in making recommendations to their students for classroom or home use. With five exceptions (indicated by an asterisk placed before the entry), all the books cited are paperbacks. Addresses of publishers have been provided for the most difficult materials to obtain. For additional publishers' addresses, teachers are advised to consult Books in Print 1981-82 (Vol. 4) and Directory of Small Magazine-Press Editors & Publishers in libraries and bookstores.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY / BIOGRAPHY

Adair, Nancy, and Casey Adair. WORD IS OUT: STORIES OF SOME OF OUR LIVES. New Glide/Delacorte, 1978. The rich, sensitive, detailed "life stories of 26 homosexual men and women," young and old, from a diversity of religious, educational, geographical, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. A classic filled with insight, love, and humor. Excellent annotated bibliography included on fiction and poetry, non-fiction, and biography.

Fairchild, Betty, and Nancy Hayward. "The Children's Story." In NOW THAT YOU KNOW: WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY. Harvest/HBJ, 1979, pp. 22-42. Authors explain in the children's own words how some lesbians and gay males come out to their parents, what some parents go through, and what "it means to our children to tell us they are gay."

Fricke, Aaron. REFLECTIONS OF A ROCK LOBSTER: A STORY ABOUT GROWING UP GAY. Alyson, 1981. "No one . . . was surprised when Aaron . . . showed up at the high school prom with a male date." A moving, honest, and often painful account of Aaron's coming to terms with his gayness in Cumberland, a small town in Rhode Island: "I knew no openly gay people. There was no one to tell me about gay literature. Cumberland had no gay organizations."

Edward C. Paolella teaches in the Department of English at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. This bibliography originally appeared, in a slightly altered form, in the New York City Gay Teachers' Association Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 4 (April 1982), P.O. Box 345, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

GROWING UP GAY, 2nd ed. Youth Liberation, 1978. (2007 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104) A must for 14-19 year-olds. In their own words young adults write provocatively on a wide range of topics: from "I'm a Faggot and Proud of It" and "I Came Out in Class" to "They Tried to 'Cure' Me of Lesbianism" and "Struggling with Myself and a Repressive Society." One 14-year-old remarks: "What we want is to be recognized as individuals with minds of our own."

Heger, Heinz. THE MEN WITH THE PINK TRIANGLE. Tr. David Fernbach. Alyson, 1980. "A unique first-hand account of the life and death of homosexual prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps." Profitably read in conjunction with Martin Sherman's BENT (Bard/Avon, 1979), the "deeply moving play about the persecution of homosexuals in Germany" under Hitler in the 1930's and '40's.

Jay, Karla. "Portrait of the Lesbian as a Young Dyke." In OUT OF THE CLOSETS: VOICES OF GAY LIBERATION. Ed. Karla Jay and Allen Young. Jove/HBJ, 1977, pp. 275-77. "I first noticed that I was different from all the other little girls when I was five, and the horror and fear of not belonging led me even then to hide what I was actually feeling, thinking, and doing."

Martin, Del, and Phyllis Lyon. "Growing Up Gay." In their LESBIAN/WOMAN, Bantam, 1972, pp. 177-204. Sensitive, realistic assessment of "a callous society which fails to realize that sex is a reality for most young people very early in their lives." Authors quote extensively from the letters of young lesbians of high school and college age who "themselves have pointed out the problems as they see them."

Newton, Esther. "High School Crack-up." In AMAZON EXPEDITION: A LESBIANFEMINIST ANTHOLOGY. Ed. Phyllis Birkby, and others. Times Change Press, 1973, pp. 43-54. One young woman's struggle to be her lesbian self at home and in high school, trying to keep herself from either going insane or committing suicide. "I . . . write about a part of my past which is not so painful to me now as it was, and which may speak to the experience of other women."

Silverstein, Charles. "Coming Out and Young Lovers." In his MAN TO MAN: GAY COUPLES IN AMERICA. Quill, 1981, pp. 73-110. Personal narratives of gay males from differing backgrounds and regions throughout the U.S. describing their first sexual experiences ranging from pleasant to depressing, gentle to violent.

Stanley, Julia Penelope, and Susan J. Wolfe, eds. THE COMING OUT STORIES. Persephone, 1980. A marvelous, inspiring collection. "We have made this book because we believe it should no longer be necessary for other wimmin to live so much of their lives in painful silence, thinking either that they are 'the only one in the world' or that their love for wimmin is an abominable perversion." Forty-one stories in all, including ones by Cruikshank, Cooper, McDaniel, Moraga, Stanley, and Grier.

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GAYELLOW PAGES. National and regional issues available. Renaissance House, Box 292 Village Station, NY 10014. Indispensable source of information for organizations and services available to the lesbian/gay community. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of alcohol/drug abuse centers and discos; bookstores and VD clinics; social movements, radio programs, and religious groups.

"Gay Materials for Use in Schools." Gay Task Force/American Library Association, c/o Barbara Gittings, Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103. The place to start. Sections on background materials, general non-fiction and fiction, young adult fiction and non-fiction, and audiovisuals. Available on request (enclose a SASE) is an indispensable list of all the GTF/ALA bibliographies at minimal cost on gay resources for the blind and physically handicapped, for teachers, for counselors, on religious studies and lesbian studies.

MacDonald, Stephen. "Young, Gay and the Problem of Self=Identity: An Annotated Bibliography." In EMERGENCY LIBRARIAN, 8, No. 1 (Sept./Oct. 1980), pp. 8-11. Useful introductory remarks on "Adolescence . . . [as] a period of transition, of insecurity and often crisis," especially for gay youth. Guidelines provided for the "Evaluation . . . of Gay Themes and Characters in Literature for Children and Young Adults." Write to journal at 697 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0A7, Canada. Twenty-three well-annotated works of fiction and non-fiction.

Yuill, Phyllis. "Resources." GAY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER, March 1982, pp. 1-2. An excellent critique of three of the latest resource materials available to teachers and parents to use with or recommend to children and young adults. Send SASE to GTA, PO Box 435, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

COUNSELING

Berzon, Betty. "Telling the Family You're Gay." In POSITIVELY GAY: NEW APPROACHES IN GAY LIFE. Ed. Betty Berzon and Robert Leighton. Celestial Arts, 1979, pp. 88-100. Excellent step-by-step approach, for those who wish to come out, by "a gay person and a therapist," with a discussion of "After the Initial Disclosure" and "If They Don't Accept Your Gayness."

GAYS AND THE LAW: A GUIDE FOR LAYPEOPLE. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., 132 W. 43rd St., NY 10036. Enclose a SASE for the booklet, available in Spanish and English, which "in question and answer form . . . attempts to answer some of the most common questions about gays and the law" about "employment, custody, family law, immigration, and housing."

Jones, Clinton R. UNDERSTANDING GAY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. Crossroad/Seabury, 1978. Something for everyone. Each chapter is introduced by a letter, including one by a gay son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, father, clergyman, transvestite husband, and transsexual son. A worthwhile book, indeed.

*"Loving Your Gay Parent." IN THE KIDS' BOOK OF DIVORCE: BY, FOR, AND ABOUT KIDS. Ed. Eric Rofes. Lewis, 1981, pp. 105-09. "We are twenty kids between the ages of 11 and 14. . . . We wrote this book because the issue of divorce has affected each of us in some way." After definitions of "homosexual," "lesbian," "gay," and "fag," are given, the issues discussed are "Finding Out that Your Parent Is Gay," "How Is Homosexuality Involved in Divorce?" "Living with a Gay Parent," "Will This Affect Me?"

Tsang, Daniel, ed. THE AGE TABOO: GAY MALE SEXUALITY, POWER AND CONSENT. Alyson/Gay Men's Press, 1981. Provocative and controversial essays pro and con by lesbian/gay teenagers and adults, including Tom Reeves, Youth Liberation, Kate Millett, Joint Council for Gay Teenagers, "A Militant Young Dyke," North American Man/Boy Love Association, and Pat Califia, on man/boy, woman/girl love. A good introduction and annotated bibliography by Daniel Tsang. For mature readers only.

YOUNG, GAY AND PROUD. Alyson, 1980. A must for senior high school students—straight and gay. Much of it written by young gays themselves, "Here's a book about: coming out in school, meeting other young gays, telling your parents, gay sexuality, finding your identity." Warm, friendly illustrations.

HEALTH CARE

O'Donnell, Mary, and others. LESBIAN HEALTH MATTERS. Santa Cruz Women's Health Center, 1979. (250 Locust St. Santa Cruz, CA 95060) A well-written and conceived book on all aspects of the physical, mental, and emotional health of lesbians of all ages and lifestyles. Good reference/resources provided; skillfully illustrated. Highly recommended.

*Rowan, Robert, and Paul J. Gillette. THE GAY HEALTH GUIDE: A MODERN MEDICINE BOOK. Little, Brown, 1978. Written in question and answer form by a urologist and psychologist as a "nonjudgmental guide for the health problems common to homosexually active men and women." Besides chapters on sexually transmitted diseases, authors discuss such issues as sexual injuries, going straight, and transsexualism; useful appendices on gay health clinics, organizations, church groups, and referral services throughout the country; index.

HISTORY

*Becker, Raymond de. THE OTHER FACE OF LOVE. Tr. Margaret Crosland and Alan Daventry. Bell, f1969. An invaluable, cross-cultural history of homosexuality from ancient times (in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine, Greece and Rome, the Moslem East, India, the Far East, and Pre-Colombian America), then through the Christian Middle Ages and the Renaissance and, finally, into the modern period as seen through the arts, literature, science, and law. A highly readable and enjoyable work with 175 black and white illustrations of the lesbian/gay experience as depicted through the world's great works of art; footnotes; no index.

Bullough, Vern L. HOMOSEXUALITY: A HISTORY. Meridian/NAL, 1979. Homosexuality from ancient Greece to Gay Liberation, in relation to religion, law, politics, education. Separate chapters on lesbianism, cross-dressing, and famous homosexuals. A good place to begin; guide for further reading; index.

Faderman, Lillian. SURPASSING THE LOVE OF MEN: ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE PRESENT. Morrow, f1981. An informative, thought-provoking, "fascinating cultural history of women's passionate friendships with each other" as seen through "literature, . . . trial records, love letters," and the like. Invaluable source book; quite readable; good notes and index.

Katz, Jonathan. GAY AMERICAN HISTORY: LESBIAN AND GAY MEN IN THE U.S.A. Crowell, 1976. A documentary history, "this pioneering work brings together . . . a large group of historical chronicles of American Lesbian and Gay male life" from 1566 to 1974. Invaluable notes, topical bibliographies, and index. Enjoyable reading.

LITERATURE

Bulkin, Elly, ed. LESBIAN FICTION: AN ANTHOLOGY. Persephone, 1981. Stories by such contemporaries as Rule, Clausen, Shockley, McDaniel, Lorde, and other lesbian writers. Includes Bulkin's essays "Introduction: A Look at Lesbian Short Fiction: and "Lesbian Short Fiction in the Classroom"; contributors' biographies; work by contributors; excellent anthology; highly recommended.

Bulkin, Elly, and Joan Larkin, eds. LESBIAN POETRY: AN ANTHOLOGY. Persephone, 1981. Poems by such twentieth-century lesbian poets as Sarton, Rich, Lorde, Larkin, McDaniel, Brown, Bissert, Moraga, and Allegra, among others. Includes Bulkin's essays "Introduction: A Look at Lesbian Poetry" and "Lesbian Poetry in the Classroom"; contributors' biographies; work by contributors; additional resources; excellent anthology; highly recommended.

Grier, Barbara. THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, 3rd ed. Naiad, 1981. An indispensable tool; an annotated bibliography of about 7,000 works depicting the lesbian in fiction, poetry, drama, biography, and autobiography; with 89 photographs of lesbian writers, including Anne and Emily Bronte, Barney and Brooks, Teasdale, Doolittle, Millay, Cather, Sarton, Rich, Lorde, and Wittig. Excellent foreword by Maida Tilchen, "The Legendary Lesbian Treasure Map."

Helbing, Terry, ed. GAY THEATRE ALLIANCE DIRECTORY OF GAY PLAYS. JH Press, 1980. An invaluable listing of plays, gay theatre companies, and playwrights; brief plot summaries of plays provided; includes plays from the 16th-through 20th-centuries.

Hoffman, William M., ed. GAY PLAYS: THE FIRST COLLECTION. Bard/Avon, 1979. Eight lesbian and gay male plays, including Orton's Entertaining Mr. Sloane and Chambers's A Late Snow; excellent historical introduction and bibliography; authors' biographies.

Kleinberg, Seymour, ed. THE OTHER PERSUASION: SHORT FICTION ABOUT GAY MEN AND WOMEN. Vintage/Random, 1977. Short stories by Faulkner, Forster, Hall, Hemingway, Stein, Williams, Rule, White, and others; introduction; about the contributors; excellent anthology; highly recommended.

Leyland, Winston, ed. ANGELS OF THE LYRE: A GAY POETRY ANTHOLOGY. Panjamdrum/Gay Sunshine, 1975. Fifty-seven contemporary gay male poets, including Alvarez, Brainard, Duncan, Elmslie, Ginsberg, Goodman, O'Hara, and Young; informative introduction discussing "five precursor anthologies"; graphics; biographical notes; highly recommended.

*Young, Ian. THE MALE HOMOSEXUAL IN LITERATURE: A BIBLIOGRAPHY, 2nd ed. Scarecrow, 1982. An indispensable tool; almost 4,300 references to gay males in fiction, drama, poetry, and autobiography, 4 essays by different authors on gay male literature (novel, drama, poetry, criticism); title index.

_____, ed. ON THE LINE: NEW GAY FICTION. Crossing, 1981. Eighteen contemporary gay male writers, including White, Gilgun, Picano, Purdy, Burroughs, and Curzon; interesting introductory essay exploring the question "Why has homosexuality been so intimately associated with the arts?", notes on contributors. A worthwhile anthology.

MINORITIES / THIRD WORLD

GAY INSURGENT, No. 6, Summer 1980. Send $2.50 to Lavender Archives, Box 2337, Philadelphia, PA 19103. An excellent issue with several articles devoted primarily to Lesbian/Gay Asian Americans, Cubans, and the Third World. Included is Audre Lorde's keynote speech "When Will the Ignorance End?" given at the National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference.

"Global Lesbianism." CONNEXIONS, No. 3, Winter 1982. Send $3.00 to journal at 4228 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609. The best collection in existence of materials on lesbian youth outside the U.S.; includes articles on lesbian youth in West Germany (a high school couple), in Indonesia (one couple put on trial, another got married), in India (a couple committed suicide), and in Latin America (feminist-lesbian couples).

Roberts, J. R., comp. BLACK LESBIANS: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. Naiad, 1981. An absolute must. Almost 350 richly annotated items arranged according to subject matter: biography, politics, literature, music, periodicals, research, and the armed forces are included. Invaluable subject/author index, directory of Third World lesbian/gay organizations, and activities for Black Lesbian research; 20 photographs; about the bibliographer.

Wiemhoff, Henry, comp. "A Preliminary Bibliography and Resource Guide: Race, Racism and the Gay Male Community." Send $1.50 to Black and White Men Together, 10 W. 76th St., Apt. #1C, NY 10023. Indispensable tool; includes materials on America, the Third World, sexism, literature, and organizations and gay groups fighting against racism.

RELIGION

Brick, Barrett L. "Judaism in the Gay Community." In POSITIVELY GAY: NEW APPROACHES IN GAY LIFE. Ed. Betty Berzon and Robert Leighton. Celestial Arts, 1979, pp. 79-89. Good introduction to being Jewish and Gay; list of Gay Jewish organizations.

McNaught, Brian. A DISTURBED PEACE: SELECTED WRITINGS OF AN IRISH CATHOLIC HOMOSEXUAL. Dignity, 1981. An honest and insightful collection of essays on being oneself, growing up gay, and having friends and lovers. Highly recommended.

Pittenger, Norman. GAY LIFESTYLES: A CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE HOMOSEXUAL. Universal Fellowship, 1977. A book well worth the reading—whatever the reader's religious and sexual orientation; highly recommended for high school students; wonderful photographs of loving gay/lesbian couples and friends. "A piece of pro-gay writing," by a straight Protestant priest, professor, theologian, and scholar.

SEX EDUCATION

Califia, Pat. SAPPHISTRY: THE BOOK OF LESBIAN SEXUALITY. Naiad, 1980. For the maturer young lesbian. Interesting and informative discussions of such topics as erotica, masturbation, partners, age, disabled lesbians, and diseases, among others. Often provocative; resource list; index; illustrations in homage to women artists.

Diamond, Liz. THE LESBIAN PRIMER. Women's Educational Media, 1979. An absolute must for younger readers as well as adults—straight, lesbian, and gay male; richly illustrated; wittily dispels myths about lesbians. Contains useful information on lesbian culture, music, records, books, periodicals, and organizations; bibliography.

*Hanckel, Frances, and John Cunningham. A WAY OF LOVE, A WAY OF LIFE: A YOUNG PERSON'S INTRODUCTION TO WHAT IT MEANS TO BE GAY. Lothrop, 1979. An invaluable work; should be in all homes and libraries. "This book is written to inform anyone, but especially young people, about what it means to be gay." Covers such topics as lesbian/gay identity, meeting gays, family and friends, counseling, intimacy, sexuality, history, law, and biography—all in terms young adults can readily understand. Wonderful photographs; good annotated subject bibliography; excellent index.

TEACHING AIDS

Crew, Louis, and Richtor Norton, eds. THE HOMOSEXUAL IMAGINATION—IN LITERATURE, IN THE CLASSROOM, IN CRITICISM. College English, 36, No. 3, Nov. 1974. Send $3.00 to NCTE, 11 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. An indispensable special issue; a rich assortment of articles and poems by such pioneers of lesbian/gay literary studies as Noll, Kantrowitz, Bentley, Curson, Austen, Clayborne, and Stanley; excellent "Checklist of Resources" divided into sections on anthologies, bibliographies, literary studies, gay liberation, periodicals, and directories.

Cruikshank, Margaret, ed. LESBIAN STUDIES. Feminist Press, 1982. An excellent collection of essays on a variety of topics by such lesbians as Bennett, Bulkin, Moraga, Roberts, Faderman, and Potter. Especially useful unit on "In the Classroom" where lesbian poetry, homophobia, Jewish lesbians in literature, and teaching The Well of Loneliness, among other issues, are discussed; excellent list of resources, sample syllabi on lesbian studies, and bibliography.

DeVito, Joseph A. "Educational Responsibilities to Gay Male and Lesbian Students." In GAYSPEAK: GAY MALE AND LESBIAN COMMUNICATION. Ed. James W. Chesebro. Pilgrim, 1981, pp. 197-207. An insightful and practical set of "Specific Guidelines for the Educator" is provided, including the recognition of the existence of gay/lesbian history, culture, and lifestyles; the avoidance of sex-role stereotypes and heterosexual presumption; and the influence of a gay/lesbian affectional life on identity, language, and modes of communicating as both "insider" and "outsider." "Gay men and lesbian students need role models . . . representative of the gay and lesbian community as a whole and . . . open and out of the closet."

Sanders, Dennis, ed. GAY SOURCE: A CATALOGUE FOR MEN. Coward, 1977. A valuable resource book with names, addresses, and phone numbers as well as

annotations on everything from hotlines to gay male classical composers, from gays as parents to travel agents. Among others, there are feature articles on publishing by Young, on film by Russo, on psycho-therapy by Tripp, on sports by Kopay, on the baths by Bell, and on Fire Island by Picano.

Vida, Ginny, ed. OUR RIGHT TO LOVE: A LESBIAN RESOURCE BOOK. Prentice-Hall, 1978. An invaluable work; should be in every library throughout the U.S. Units of essays by authorities, many of them women of the National Gay Task Force, on such issues as lesbian identity, relationships, research and therapy, sexuality, health, activism, law, the media, and culture. A copious and indispensable bibliography listing bibliographies and guides, non-fiction, biography, fiction, poetry, periodicals and journals, and pamphlets; an extremely useful "Lesbian National Resource List" is also included.

BETTER COMMUNICATION CAN EASE CENSORSHIP THREAT TO SCHOOLS

People fear and resist what they don't understand. In the belief that a better grasp of the aims of teaching in elementary and secondary schools can ease citizens' fears regarding intellectual freedom in public education, NCTE has published a new booklet on this issue. THE STUDENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW tells what local educators and concerned citizens should do to foster public support for the constitutional freedom to learn.

In a policy statement adopted November 19, 1982, the NCTE Board of Directors spelled out the difference between selection and censorship, which sometimes appear similar "because both involve selection from myriad alternatives." But selection criteria are positive; while censorship is negative. "Schools are for learning--for including information, not excluding it," says Diane Shugert, chair of the NCTE Committee Against Censorship.

THE STUDENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW deals with questions such as these: Why do "good books" often become the target of censors? What tactics do pro-censorship organizations use? If good books elevate, do bad books degrade? What can school districts do to protect teachers from attack?

THE STUDENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW by Lee Burress and Edward B. Jenkinson. 50 pages, paper. Price $2.25; NCTE members $2.00. ISBN: 0-8141-4803-4. LC: 82-8313. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 48034.

MONDAY MORNING

TEACHERS: Please send in your creative ideas for lessons on any aspect of teaching English for this section of the Bulletin. MF

A SWEET COMPOSITION

Connie Pilkington

A sweet composition, as you will see,
Is a story made up of a few of these.

The characters to use are listed below,
These are candy bars as everyone knows.

Use as many names as you sensibly can,
Be creative and funny, let loose, be a ham.

One and a half to two pages is the least I expect,
Any less on your part then you'll get an F.

If you need an example, I have one right here:
"Mr. Goodbar went to Mars with the 3 Musketeers."

Enough of this poem, you need to begin;
I want a humorous story, so dig right in.

* * * * *

Baby Ruth
$100,000
Zero
Chocolite
Butterfinger
Pay Day
Milky Way
Power House
Almond Joy
Caravelle
Whatchamacallit
Summit
Butternut

* * * * *

Hershey's
Crunch
Clark
Oh Henry.
Kit Kat
Mounds
Zagnut
Marathon
Snickers
3 Musketeers
Mr. Goodbar
Mars
Bit o'Honey

Connie Pilkington teaches 11th grade English at Charles Page High School, Sand Springs, Oklahoma. She is also a writing consultant with the Oklahoma Writing Project.

SOME WRITING EVERY DAY

Carl L. Anderson

In my junior high chorus classes we do some writing every day. But I think we do more than just "some writing."

First, just before open house was held students were asked to write a letter to their parents telling them what we had been doing in chorus. This gave students an opportunity to reflect on what they have been doing in class besides just singing. I was pleasantly surprised that the students were aware of what they were accomplishing. Some of the better letters were typed up, copied, run off and made available to parents as a "handout" when they came to open house. One student wrote her letter to Santa Claus, invited him to visit the class, and asked if the skiing was good at this time of the year. I loved it.

We regularly paraphrase the words of songs we're learning. I find that students are already getting better at it. I also find they don't understand what they are singing about in many instances but are forced to find out when trying to put thoughts into their own words. This writing also helps students memorize words sooner and better for performance.

Another writing assignment takes place as we travel to other parts of the world. A listening lesson occurs when we play "El Salon Mexico" by Aaron Copeland. We have pictures on the walls to encourage students' imaginations. They are asked to write whatever comes to mind: poetry, a story, a description of the music, or what they "see" with their ears.

"American in Paris" by George Gershwin provided a trip to France, at which time we talked about many attractions in Paris. We wrote the names of these on the board so that students might use them in their writing. (Spelling, Social Studies???)

It was announced that all writing was to be written to be read to the rest of the class, thereby creating a peer group audience rather than an audience of one (teacher).

Since the chorus students want to produce a musical play, I am stressing preparation in public speaking by requiring every one to read his writing aloud to the class. It is getting better all the time.

Maybe later we'll take a trip to "The Pines of Rome" by Resphegi or to the "Carnival of the Animals" by Saint Saens or perhaps to "Pictures at an Exhibition" by Moussorgsky.

Also planned are letters to the composers of some of the songs telling why students liked their compositions or, if they didn't, telling them (diplomatically) what they would like to see changed in the composition. We might get some analytical thinking done here.

Carl L. Anderson, a former music teacher, now teaches writing and math at Gridley Junior High School, Tucson, Arizona.

I am excited about writing and find that the students are enjoying it since the only threatening aspect has been this: you must write something.

Bibliotherapy

Teachers daily encounter students who are struggling to cope with difficult situations: a death in the family, a broken home, poverty, rejection by peers, or physical handicaps. How to deal with such students is a question with no simple answer. For many teachers, the idea of intervening in the life of a troubled student is unpleasant, and they are reluctant to do more than suggest a visit to the school counselor. Other teachers want to help, but are not sure how to proceed. For these teachers, especially reading and English teachers, bibliotherapy might be the answer.

Simply stated, bibliotherapy is the use of books to help people solve problems. There are three steps in the process: identification, in which the reader associates himself or herself with a character or situation in a book; catharsis, in which the reader shares the feelings and motivations of the book's character; and insight, which takes place as the reader realizes that his or her situation can be dealt with more effectively by imitating or adopting the ideas from the reading material (Schrodes).

Clearly, not every teacher is qualified to conduct bibliotherapy. Those who undertake to do so should possess emotional stability, a genuine interest in working with others, the ability to listen and empathize without moralizing.

A review of bibliotherapy research shows that bibliotherapy has been successfully used in changing attitudes toward minority groups, diminishing certain fears, helping students deal with death, and developing moral maturity. It should not, however, be viewed as a panacea. Its successes can be restricted by a variety of factors, including the student's readiness to see himself or herself in a mirror, the skill of the bibliotherapist, the materials used, the tendency of some students to rationalize away problems when reading about them, the tendency of some to use literature as an escape, and the relationship of the student and the therapist (Cornett). It is also important to note that bibliotherapy is not the answer to deep-seated emotional or mental problems; the teacher should, of course, refer students with such problems to the appropriate professionals. Bibliotherapy can, however, be a valuable means of helping students cope with some of life's difficulties.

Notes

1. Bernice J. Salup and Alane Salup, *Bibliotherapy: An Historical Overview* (Arlington, Va.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1981). [ED 200 496]

2. Caroline Schrodes, *Bibliotherapy: A Theoretical and Clinical-Experimental Study* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1949).

3. D. H. Russell and Caroline Schrodes, "Contributions of Research in Bibliotherapy to the Language-Arts Program," vol. 58 (September-October 1950), pp. 335–42, 411–20.

4. Joni Bodart, "Bibliotherapy: The Right Book for the Right Person at the Right Time—And More," *Top of the News*, vol. 36 (Winter 1980), pp. 183–188. [EJ 225 829] See also, Schrodes, *Bibliotherapy: A Theoretical and Clinical-Experimental Study*.

5. Miriam Schultheis and Robert Pavlik, *Classroom Teachers' Manual for Bibliotherapy* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Benet Learning Center, 1977). [ED 163 493]

6. Schultheis and Pavlik, *Classroom Teachers' Manual for Bibliotherapy*.

7. Claudia E. Cornett and Charles R. Cornett, *Bibliotherapy: The Right Book at the Right Time*. *Fastback 151* (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1980). [ED 192 380]

8. Gary A. Negin, "Bibliotherapy for the Atypical Reader," *Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal*, vol. 24 (September 1979), pp. 12–16. [ED 177 498]

9. Schultheis and Pavlik, *Classroom Teachers' Manual for Bibliotherapy*.

10. Cornett and Cornett, *Bibliotherapy: The Right Book at the Right Time*.

11. Joanne E. Bernstein, "Helping Young Children Cope with Separation: A Bibliotherapeutic Approach" (Paper presented at the third annual meeting of the Parents and Reading Conference, New York, New York, February 1978). [ED 170 895]

12. Cornett and Cornett, *Bibliotherapy: The Right Book at the Right Time*.

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